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THE
ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

A STUDY IN THE HISTORY
OF DEFINITION

BY

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TO
MY WIFE

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF
THE WISE, PATIENT, AND SYMPATHETIC COUNSEL
TO WHICH IT OWES SO MUCH

This Little Volume

UNDERTAKEN AT HER SUGGESTION AND
COMPLETED WITH HER HELP
IS AFFECTIONATELY
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PREFACE

THE purpose of the following essay is less ambitious than the title may seem to imply. It is not my intention to add another to the many attempts to define Christianity, but rather to analyze the problem involved in such a definition, and to give an account of the more important attempts which have been made to solve it. As the sub-title indicates, what is here offered is simply a study in the *history* of definition. But as all progress is based upon an accurate knowledge of the past, it is hoped that this survey of recent definitions may prove not without its value in assisting others as they approach the more difficult task.

In view of the largeness of the theme, it has not seemed wise to attempt any general bibliography. The works found most helpful have been mentioned in the notes ; and in the chapters on Schleiermacher, on Hegel, and on Ritschl, where the importance of the subject seemed to require it, the literature has been cited at some length. It is needless to say that the lists given make no claim to be exhaustive.

While recognizing my indebtedness to many friends for stimulus and suggestion, I desire to express my special thanks to my colleague, Professor George William Knox, D.D., for his valuable counsel and criticism.

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
September, 1902.

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THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

IN the chapters that follow, it is proposed to study the history of the attempt to define Christianity, and to record the more important definitions to which this attempt has given rise. The theme is historical. But history is a broad field, and the traveller who enters it without compass or guide may easily go astray. There are many senses in which the question, What is Christianity? may be asked, and our study will be profitable in proportion to the definiteness with which we conceive the problem with whose answers we shall have to do. It is such clearness of thought that this opening chapter is designed to promote.

1. *The Importance of a Scientific Definition of Christianity.*

If it be asked what is the object of a definition of Christianity, the answer can be given in a word. It is a scientific conception of the Christian religion. The goal of all science is definition. With the recognition

of this need, and the effort to satisfy it, the scientific spirit is born. As the ability to think clearly, accurately, and exhaustively marks the difference between knowledge which is merely general and popular and that which is strictly scientific, so the ability to gather the results of such clear thinking into phrases which are concise and luminous is the measure of the usefulness and permanence of the conclusions which have been reached. To refuse to define, whatever the cause—whether the attempt be deemed needless because of the familiarity of the object, or regarded as impossible because of its complexity—is to renounce the possibility of knowledge as science conceives it. In the case of any object, therefore, to record its successive definitions is to write the history of its science.

This being the case, the subject proposed for the following essay has much more than an antiquarian interest. In studying the historic definitions of Christianity, we are really retracing the rise and progress of the effort to conceive Christianity scientifically. Whatever may be one's attitude to the Christian religion, this is a topic of unusual interest. No one who desires to understand the drama of human life in its completeness can ignore an influence of such far-reaching importance. But the difficulty of the theme matches its interest. When one considers the antiquity of Christianity; the length and variety of its history; the many-sidedness of its relations; the widely different forms which it has assumed, and is still assuming; the great influence which it has exerted, and still exerts,

upon the lives and fortunes of individuals, and upon the progress of civilization as a whole; its close contact with and constant reaction upon the allied fields of literature, philosophy, ethics, and art; the tender and intimate associations with which it is interwoven — it becomes apparent that the effort to define so complex and many-sided a phenomenon must be as difficult as it is fascinating. How much shall we include in our survey? Where change is so constant, how shall we distinguish between what is transient and temporary, and what is permanent and abiding? Out of the thousand characteristics forcing themselves upon our attention, how pick out the few which are essential and determining? The familiarity of the subject adds to its difficulty. It is not easy to judge impartially that which is so much a part of one's life as is the case of Christianity with many of its students. Often we find men ignoring the question altogether, as too simple to need answer. What is Christianity? Why, every one knows that. What you and I and the next man have been brought up to believe and practise about God and religion. Under the circumstances it is instructive to discover the causes which, after many centuries of neglect, have brought this problem once more into the forefront of human thought, and to follow the steps by which our students of religious philosophy and of comparative religion have sought to bring order out of the chaos of confused ideas which they found serving as an apology for definition.

But the interest which gathers about the definition of Christianity is not merely intellectual. Religious

interests also are at stake. To the conviction of many of its adherents, the Christian religion occupies a wholly exceptional position. It is not merely one among other religions, like Buddhism or Mohammedanism. It is the absolute religion. It rests upon a divine revelation of unique character, and claims an authority which men dispute at their peril. The truths which it proclaims, the life which it imparts, have more than passing significance. They have to do with eternal realities, and bear directly upon the highest welfare of man. If ever clear thinking is important, it is important here. Practical interests turn upon our ability to give a correct definition. Not merely the scholar but the man on the street needs to know what Christianity is, that he may be able to order his conduct accordingly.

It is the combination of this extraordinary claim with a changing history which renders the problem of the definition of Christianity at once so fascinating and so perplexing. Here we have a religion which claims absoluteness, which offers itself in the midst of a world abounding in half truths and inadequacies as the perfect and final solution of the problem of life, and which yet, when closely studied, proves itself to be the subject of a historic development in which it has successively assumed the most various forms. Study these forms, and you find that they differ one from another so widely that it seems almost impossible to discover any common principle. The representatives of each reproach the others with serious departure from the truth, and find in the adherents of Mohammed or of Gautama positions scarcely more repugnant to their

religious sense than those held by men who are in name at least their fellow-Christians. For the man who is content to take his stand within one of these smaller bodies, and adopt without question whatever it may regard as essential, the definition of Christianity will have no difficulties. But when one tries to gain an impartial view of the whole, and seeks a definition which shall be really scientific, the matter is by no means so simple. It becomes important, therefore, to consider with some care what such a definition involves.

2. *What is Involved in the Scientific Definition of Christianity.*

The difficulty of defining may be well illustrated in the case of the word "definition" itself. What do we mean by a scientific definition? Suppose we say that it is the effort to express as clearly and concisely as possible what are the essential qualities of any object of knowledge as distinct from those that are accidental. This seems simple enough, but as soon as it is closely examined it is seen to plunge us into a very mare's-nest of metaphysical puzzles. Essence, quality, accident, object are words which have been the battle-grounds of the philosophers ever since philosophy began. What do we mean by the essence of a thing as distinct from its accidents? How shall we distinguish among the different qualities some as being more important than others? How penetrate back of our subjective apprehension to the nature of the thing at all?

Out of these perplexities we may find a way of escape

sufficiently broad for our present necessities by calling attention to the essentially subjective character of all definition. Without raising any of the vexed questions as to the difference between substance and attribute, or the real existence of things as distinct from our subjective apprehension of them, we may recognize clearly that everything which presents itself as an object of knowledge at all presents itself as the possessor of countless qualities by which it is at once linked to and separated from other objects of knowledge. A strictly exhaustive definition — that is to say, a definition which should include all about the object which could conceivably be known — would have to take in all these qualities from the most abstract to the most concrete. But it is evident that such an enumeration, even if possible, would be valueless. It would give us too much. All sense of proportion and of relative value would be lost. It would be impossible to see the forest because of the number of the trees. If we are to have a definition which shall be of any practical use we must distinguish between qualities and quantities, and, like the boy in the fable with the jar of plums, be willing to sacrifice some that we may be able to enjoy the others.

What, then, is the principle which determines the selection? As Professor James¹ has well shown, it is essentially subjective; in other words, it is found in the interest and the need of the man who defines. In

¹ Psychology, II. p. 35 *sq.* What Professor James in this passage asserts of reasoning, applies *a fortiori* to the definition which is the basis of all reasoning.

defining any object, we pick out those particular qualities for which at the time we happen to have use, and ignore the rest. This explains the difference in definitions with which we are so constantly confronted. Ask a schoolboy, an artist, and a scientist to define a peach, and you will get as many different answers. To the first the distinctive quality of the peach is its sweetness, to the second its beauty, to the third its place in the vegetable kingdom. And so on through indefinite variations. Each of these definitions will be true as far as it goes, but partial. It emphasizes that in the object in which the one who is defining happens to be interested at the time, and passes over everything else.

A scientific definition differs from the definitions of common life simply in the greater thoroughness with which it sets about its task, and the wider point of view which determines its perspective. We may group the most important qualities in such a definition under the three heads of exhaustiveness, accuracy, and universality. A scientific definition is exhaustive in the sense that it is based upon the widest possible induction of facts. It includes, not all the qualities (for that as we have seen is impossible), but all the *distinctive* qualities of its object; the qualities which set that particular thing apart from others as having a character of its own. It is further accurate. It is based upon a careful as well as a wide observation, and seeks as far as possible to avoid the errors which are the natural result of hasty or careless generalization. Again, it is universal, by which is meant that the point of view from which it is constructed is, so far as pos-

sible, that of man as man. However legitimate and precious may be the individual interests which gather about particular objects, the man of science must ignore them, that he may indicate the permanent qualities which abide in the midst of change, and which make their appeal to humanity as such.

But when all is said, it remains true that the interest which determines a scientific definition is as subjective as that of the schoolboy to whom an orange is simply a round yellow object good to eat. That which explains the choice of certain qualities rather than others in a scientific definition is the fact that they appeal to certain permanent human interests and answer questions which man as man cannot but ask. Back of the elaborate structure of modern science, often hidden under abstractions unintelligible to the ordinary man, yet never wholly absent, is this living human interest — the desire to know, to understand, that one may feel and act. Let the time come when this shall cease to be the case, and the entire edifice which has been erected with such painstaking labor will fall to the ground.¹

¹ It is hardly necessary to say that, in taking this position it is far from our intention to deny the objective basis of the qualities which we are constrained in so subjective a fashion to recognize. The question as to the real nature of the objects of knowledge lies entirely apart from the line of thought which we have been following, and may be differently answered by men who agree in the general position here set forth. As a matter of fact, so far from the subjective considerations to which we have called attention imperilling the objective foundation of our knowledge, they seem to require an ontological basis far richer and more many-sided than it has often been the fashion of philosophers to recognize. To say that I decide from subjective grounds to which of many impressions forcing themselves upon me I shall give attention is a very

The bearing of all this upon the matter with which we are immediately concerned is obvious. In seeking a scientific definition of Christianity, we are not obliged to ignore the subjective considerations which play so large a rôle in the history of religion, that we may transport ourselves into some objective world of purely disinterested knowledge. Such an attitude, even if possible, would defeat its own end. For it would disregard those qualities of Christianity, in which its distinctive character historically consists. Science does not create; it observes and reports; and a definition of Christianity which would be scientifically valid must make place for the feelings of hope and of fear, of awe and of mystery, of love and of loyalty which have been characteristic of the Christian religion from the first.

Nor in taking this position do we mean simply to assert that the student of Christianity should recognize the Christian experience as a factor to be reckoned with in his definition, without feeling any personal interest in its significance or validity. Sympathy is the key to knowledge in all departments of life. Even in the branches of science which we call natural, such as physics or chemistry, a keen sense of the possible value

different thing from saying that I am the creator of my own impressions. Here the facts of the social life interpose an emphatic veto. The agreement of many men in common judgments naturally points to an objective basis for knowledge quite independent of the individual apprehension. All that we are here concerned to maintain is the fact that subjective considerations do enter into the making of our definitions — even our scientific definitions — and hence that there can be no adequate discussion of such a theme as now engages us which ignores the part they play.

and meaning of even the most unpromising phenomenon is the condition of insight. No branch of science can progress without the use of the constructive imagination, and the constructive imagination is only another name for a sense of universal values in individual things. The higher in the scale of values we go, and the more personal and individual become the interests at stake, the greater is the necessity for such sympathetic insight, based upon experience. Without the art sense, the effort to construct a definition of art would be ludicrous. No less certainly doomed to failure is the attempt at a scientific treatment of Christianity by a man destitute of the religious experience. Only through this experience is it possible to gain an insight into the particular values and meanings which theological terms are meant to express. So far, then, from the Christian experience incapacitating a man for making a scientific definition of Christianity, it is the indispensable condition of success in the attempt.

But if the religious experience does not necessarily disqualify a man for the scientific study of Christianity, it must be admitted that it has its peculiar temptations and dangers. There is a sacredness about the religious life which casts a halo about all that it touches. The individual tends necessarily to identify his own experience with the whole of the religious life, and to judge others by their agreement or disagreement with his subjective standard. Where this is the case, a scientific estimate is impossible. For science, as we have seen, deals with the universal, and tries to discover and to describe those insights and values which abide

through the changing centuries and make their appeal to man as man. The success of a scientific definition of Christianity is therefore to be judged by its ability to meet such a universal test; to express, in terms recognized as valid by large bodies of men, that which successive generations of Christians have found distinctive in the religion of Christ.

It cannot be too often insisted that the Christianity of which alone science is able to take cognizance is a historic religion. It began at a definite time and place. It has passed through certain specific stages and undergone certain definite changes. It occupies to-day a distinctive place in the religious life and thought of man. It is this historic religion and no other which science recognizes, and which it seeks to define. If any one chooses to construct a religion of his own out of his individual feelings and imaginings, and baptize it Christianity, he is of course at liberty to do so. But by the fact of so doing he removes himself from the sphere of objective realities in which the present discussion moves. Science, we repeat, deals with universal judgments. The experience of the individual may help him to understand historic Christianity; it cannot serve as a substitute for it, or relieve him of the necessity of facing the difficulties and answering the questions which a study of historic Christianity presents.

If we survey the chief historic definitions of Christianity, we find that it is at this point that they are most defective. Each individual or generation or church picks out that feature in historic Christianity

which seems to him or to it the most important, and affirms it as if it were the whole. When inconsistent or contradictory phenomena are pointed out, they are either ignored, or attributed to misunderstanding or to corruption. True Christianity, which is identified with the particular views of the individual or church in question, is represented as a constant, from which all departures are to be counted heretical variations. So far as such a position is defended by rational arguments, or by the appeal to considerations grounded in the nature of the religious experience, and so open to be tested by each man for himself, it may be regarded as scientifically legitimate, and the only question to be decided is whether the grounds adduced in any particular case are really valid. But when, as is often the case, appeal is made to the authority conceived to reside in Christianity as supernatural, to override intellectual opposition, the scientific standpoint is abandoned, and the attempt to the history of which this essay is devoted is given up.

There can be no question that this unwillingness to submit the claim of Christianity to the tests recognized in other departments of life has greatly hindered the scientific understanding of it. It is easy to understand the causes of this unwillingness. The authority which belongs to the absolute religion has seemed incompatible with the openness of mind which is characteristic of the scientific point of view. The purpose of revelation has been assumed to be to supplement the weakness of human reason, and to furnish an infallible certainty not possible in any other way. Growth,

progress, change of any kind has seemed inconsistent with the dignity of a revealed religion, and the Christianity of any age — whether as expressed in church, Bible, or individual religious experience — has been uncritically identified with that of the past and of the future. *Roma locuta est ; causa finita est* has been the mood in which our question has been too often approached by Protestant as well as by Catholic.

In view of this fact, of which history gives abundant illustration, it becomes a fair question whether a scientific definition, such as that of which we are in search, is compatible with the Christian claim to be the absolute religion. The issue thus raised is so fundamental that it is necessary to face it frankly. It will make a great difference in our study if we are obliged to exclude from our category of scientific definitions all which proceed on the basis of the absoluteness of Christianity. In determining whether this be so or not we shall be greatly helped by knowing what history has to tell us of the meaning of the word.

3. *Historic Conceptions of the Absolute in Their Bearing upon the Definition of Christianity.*

The word "Absolute" has had an eventful history. Few terms have been the centre of more long-continued and determined controversy. None has assumed in the course of the centuries more varying and even contradictory meanings. To some philosophers it has a purely negative significance. To others it is the most positive of conceptions. Mr. Spencer defines it as the

unrelated. To the philosopher of Hegelian sympathies, on the other hand, it is the home and the ground of all possible relations. Ritschl would banish it utterly from the vocabulary of religion. To Kaftan, it gives the formula for the knowledge of God in every spiritual faith. A little reflection, however, shows that beneath these divergent interpretations, there is a common element which gives them unity.

Common to the word in all its uses is the element of finality. When we reach the absolute, whether in thought or life, we come to the end. With the relative we may argue and adjust matters. By shifting our point of view we may gain new light and begin over again. With the absolute, this is impossible. Here we reach an ultimate fact which admits no question, allows no argument, and about whose colossal and inevitable bulk, no by-path offers a way of escape. This character of finality appears in our familiar speech. When I say my mind is absolutely made up, I mean that I have reached an irrevocable decision — one which it is useless to question and which no argument can shake. So when I speak of an absolute standard, I mean one which admits of no dispute, one whose authority no reasonable man can deny, and the appeal to which must therefore be final. In like manner, when the philosopher speaks of the Absolute, he indicates that point in the explanation of things where thought stops, because it can go no further. In the region of the finite and relative, we press back from one cause to another in an endless series. But when we reach the Absolute the series is broken. Here is

the ultimate reality, the final principle, the bottom fact of the universe, back of which it is impossible to go.

Starting with this general idea of the Absolute as the ultimate reality, we pass on to consider more in detail the different conceptions which men have formed of its nature. We may group these for convenience under three heads, which for want of better names we may call respectively, the ontological, the mathematical, and the psychological. The titles are not chosen as strictly accurate but as roughly descriptive. As a matter of fact, the first and the third are by no means exclusive, a view of the Absolute being possible which shall be at once ontological and psychological.¹

1. By ontological conceptions we mean such as are the outgrowth of the older uncritical realism which is characteristic of philosophy in its pre-Kantian stages. Here the Absolute is conceived as a reality independent of, and sharply contrasted with, all relative or finite existence; a being supernatural in nature, and as such belonging to a different world from the realm of second causes which we call nature; yet touching it at points many or few, and capable, under proper conditions, of becoming in a true sense an object of human knowledge. The view thus described differs from the mathematical view in that its conception of the Absolute is positive, not negative. Its ultimate is a reality which, however far removed from the world of ordinary experience, is yet in a true sense an object of knowledge, and a cause

¹ In the larger sense, all views which ground knowledge in objective reality are ontological. The word is here used in a restricted sense to denote that form of realism which ignores the subjective conditions of knowledge.

of effects. It differs from the psychological view in that it finds the essence of the Absolute in its contrast to the finite, and, in its efforts to explain and defend it, looks with suspicion upon all considerations which are subjective in their nature.

2. By mathematical conceptions we mean such as conceive the Absolute negatively, after the analogy of the mathematical infinite; which see in it, not a definite reality which can be known and which may be felt as a cause of effects, but simply a concept of limitation — the mark of the boundary of our knowledge. According to this view, however much we may learn, we can never attain to a knowledge of the Absolute. For the Absolute by definition is unrelated. It is that which lies beyond; the boundless, limitless, unfathomable somewhat lying outside experience, toward which we are forever pressing, but unto which we can never attain. It may call forth feelings of awe, or reverence, or longing, as things mysterious and unapproachable are apt to do, but it does not admit closer contact. The Absolute is in its very nature unknowable.

3. By psychological conceptions finally we mean such as seek to combine a positive conception of the Absolute with a critical foundation in the processes of human knowledge. To those who hold this point of view, the Absolute is not something which lies outside the world of human experience and reveals itself only at rare moments and by supernatural means. It is present as an element in all experience; the ultimate reality which is the basis of all life, and which gives unity and meaning to the world. As such it surpasses

man's power perfectly to comprehend. The only way to attain a complete knowledge of it would be to compass within one's own soul all finite experience. But it does not follow, as advocates of the mathematical view claim, that it is strictly unknowable. Through our finite human experience, imperfect though it be, we may attain to a real, though limited, knowledge of the divine, and gain understanding of the nature and purposes of the being upon whom the universe depends. But this knowledge is not to be gained, as the adherents of the older ontological view maintain, by putting ourselves outside of experience, and trying to construct a being with qualities diametrically opposed to our own, but rather by seeking to understand experience, and to determine, in the midst of the infinite variety which it contains, what are the qualities and purposes which alone have permanent meaning and worth. When we have discovered these, we shall have attained a knowledge of the Absolute.

On this common basis, there is ample room for differences of construction. One may be distrustful of speculation, technically so called, and accepting the Kantian dualism of the theoretical and the practical reason, confine man's knowledge of the Absolute to the realm of the conscience or of the religious feeling. Or, one may favor a bolder procedure, claiming for the intellect the same rights which others grant to the conscience, and, on the basis of the needs and longings of the whole man, rising to a conception of the ultimate reality which shall include all sides of life, and show itself master of as broad a territory as that assigned

to the Absolute in the most daring flights of the old ontology. But, whether more or less sceptical in their speculative views, all thinkers who adopt the psychological view are at one in this, that they win their conception of the Absolute from the facts of common experience, find God in the human soul, and rely for the proof of their propositions upon the success with which they satisfy the rational, the moral, and the emotional needs of man.

It is clear that when we speak of the absoluteness of Christianity, it makes a great difference in which of these three senses we use the term. The man who holds the ontological view will follow a very different method, and reach a very different conclusion from him whose viewpoint is psychological. While, if we adopt the mathematical view, the very idea of an absolute religion becomes a contradiction in terms. This fundamental difference of viewpoint has a practical bearing upon the problem which now engages us. We may illustrate by considering the different ways in which the three parties approach the definition of Christianity.

To those who take the ontological view, the absoluteness of Christianity centres in its miraculous features. As the Absolute, by hypothesis, belongs to a higher world than that of ordinary finite existence, it can only manifest itself to man in extraordinary ways. From this point of view the supernatural character of Christianity must lie at the heart of any definition of it. Whether we call it the religion of revelation, to distinguish it from those whose truths have been gained without any supernatural aid, or the true religion, to

distinguish it from such as are false or imperfect, or the absolute religion to separate it from those which, however lofty and admirable, are yet partial and temporary, is all one. In each case the characteristics which are emphasized by the ordinary student, and by which he seeks to classify it, if not ignored, fall into the background. The essence of Christianity is its absoluteness, and the essence of absoluteness lies in the fact that it lifts its subject above the standards which obtain in the ordinary walks of life. We find abundant illustrations of this view both in the theology of Catholicism and of Protestantism.

To begin with the former : according to traditional Catholic theology, true Christianity and the church Catholic are one and the same. God, who is the absolute reality, has set in the world an institution through which, and through which alone, men, otherwise ignorant and sinful, may have access to Himself. This institution is many-sided. It includes doctrines by which the truth of God is revealed, sacraments through which the grace of God is mediated, ministers in whom the authority of God is incarnate, and who are charged to watch over the flock committed to their care, and to see to it that they do not stray from truth and duty. As a supernatural institution, the church belongs to a higher world than that of our common experience, and is not subject to the standards which govern the rest of human thought and life. This does not mean that her claims are irrational. For the God who gave the church is also the author of nature, and between His works there can be no contradiction.

But it means that they lie beyond the realm to which unaided reason can attain. As the absolute authority, the demands of the church must be met with humble submission, quite irrespective of their appeal to the individual reason or conscience. Only after such complete surrender, including intellect and will alike, can one hope to attain a knowledge of the Christian mysteries. *Credo ut intelligam*. Faith must precede knowledge. And faith, to the Catholic, means an act of the will in which, at the bidding of an external authority, a man accepts truths and conforms to practices, the reason for which he cannot understand.

Much the same view is taken by many Protestants of the Bible. According to traditional Protestant theology, the absoluteness of Christianity consists in the possession of a body of divine truth, supernaturally revealed and preserved in an inspired book, the Bible, whose infallible record is a guarantee against error, and the final court of appeal in the case of any dispute. By this it is not meant, of course, to affirm that Christianity is merely a body of doctrines. To the most dogmatic of seventeenth century theologians, Christianity is much more than this. It is a divine life as well as an inspired teaching, and it is embodied in an institution which, no less unqualifiedly than the church Catholic, claims for itself divine sanction. But it is meant that if we seek definitely to locate the absoluteness of Christianity; to discover what it is, which gives it its unique authority and justifies its extraordinary claims, it must be found in the possession of the supernatural revelation contained in the Bible.

Divine as may be the Christian life (and to Protestant as well as to Catholic regeneration and sanctification are the supernatural work of the Holy Ghost), it is yet imperfect in the best of Christians. No believer, however far he may be advanced in the Christian graces, can turn to his fellow and say, "In me you behold true Christianity in its purity." Nor is the church as a whole in better case. Great as may be its authority, the divines of Westminster admit that as an institution, human as well as divine, it contains in its purest representatives some admixture of error.¹ Its councils may err, and many of them have erred. To the decisions of none of them can we turn with confidence as giving us Christianity, pure and undefiled. The test by which we determine absolute truth lies back of these in the divine revelation we call the Bible. Here we have in its perfection the deposit of divine truth, the standard by which all that calls itself Christian must stand or fall. And to this standard, when any question arises, every Christian has the right, and it is his duty, to appeal for himself.

In spite of the great differences between these two answers their points of contact are obvious. Both rest upon the same philosophical foundation, and move in the same world of thought. This becomes apparent as soon as we glance at the arguments which are adduced in their support. In both cases internal evidence is ignored, and the truth or falsehood of the position taken, so far as the world at large is concerned, is made to rest upon grounds external to the nature of Christianity.

¹ Cf. *West. Conf.* xxv. 2; xxx. 2, with xxv, 5.

The clearest statement of the official Catholic apologetic is given by the Vatican Council.¹ To the question whether there is any rational test by which the Catholic claim may be tested, and the absoluteness of Christianity rationally, that is, scientifically, established, the fathers of the Council answer in the affirmative. There is such a test, and it is to be found in prophecy and miracle. For the individual Christian, the supernatural witness of the Holy Ghost, which he experiences in his own soul, may suffice. But for men at large, other evidence is needed. Out of regard for the feebleness of human reason God has therefore added to the supernatural evidence of Christian experience the rational evidence of miracle and prophecy, that by this most manifest proof the authority of the church may be abundantly attested to the dullest intelligence.

According to this line of reasoning, the rational proof of the divine nature of Christianity is not to be found in its own intrinsic qualities, but in certain external marks added thereto, as a seal is added to a document to certify to the genuineness of a handwriting, of whose author we were else ignorant. In the apologetic of Christianity internal evidence plays no part. There is, to be sure, a witness of the Holy Spirit to the individual soul. But this, as a private and personal experience, is not open to men in general, and cannot be made — as indeed Catholic theologians do not make it — the basis of a scientific argument. It belongs to the very conception of the Absolute which it is sought to prove

¹ *Dogmatic Decrees*, chap. iii. quoted in Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. II. p. 242 sq.

that its rational evidence cannot be found within itself. What is needed is an authority which is independent of reason, and which, if need be, can override its demands. How, then, can reason sit as judge upon that before which it is its duty to bow? Clearly the only evidence which is here in place is external, and scientific proof, if possible at all, can only be by indirection.¹

¹ What we have just given is the official apologetic of Catholicism. In practice the procedure admits of indefinite variation, according to the special situation in which the apologist may find himself placed. Thus we find Catholics, like Father Hecker, freely using internal evidence in support of the claims of their church. Only one must be careful not to lean too hard on reason, and stumble at those points in Catholic doctrine or practice which seem to the individual unfit. To do this is to violate the Catholic principle of submission, and may easily imperil one's own soul. Again, we find Catholics talking pleasantly of the harmony between religion and science, and using for their own purposes such of the results of modern scientific research as lend themselves to the support or illustration of the truths they wish to defend. Only, in case of a difference between science and tradition, it is the former which must yield. Among the functions of the church Catholic, none is more important than this, of setting bounds to human research and saying to the presumptuous prophets of an overbold science, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." Still again, we find frank recognition of the evils which show themselves so painfully in many who claim and exercise high authority in the church Catholic. Catholic apologists are ready to grant you that a pope may sin. But that makes him no less vicar of Christ, and he who questions his authority does so at his peril. Or still again — to shift our point of illustration — to those who point out that the teachings of the church have altered with the centuries, so that that which was once allowed is now forbidden, or *vice versa*, it is frankly admitted that, though in itself unchanging and infallible, Catholic truth is but gradually revealed. The distinction is made between dogma which does not change, and the definition of it which is ever changing to meet the changing needs of men. The church possesses absolute truth, and has done so from the first. But she does not always make it known. There is many a question to which men crave an answer as to which, because it has not yet been defined, the pope is as ignorant as the humblest Christian of his flock.

Exactly the same line of reasoning is followed by many Protestants. Substitute the Bible for the church, and the statement of the Vatican Council will serve as an excellent syllabus of the line of argument set forth in more than one text-book of Protestant apologetics. To the latter as to the former, the final test of the truth of Christianity for the individual is the appeal which it makes to his own soul. It is the inward work of the Holy Spirit, "bearing witness by and with the Word" in the heart of the believer, by which alone he receives "full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof."¹ But this experience, being of a strictly individual character, is not fitted in Protestantism any more than in Catholicism, to be made the basis of a scientific proof of universal validity. And so we find the Protestant apologist, in exactly the same fashion as his Catholic predecessor, seeking support for his position in the external arguments of prophecy and miracle. As the Catholic appeals for his sanction for the divine authority of the church to the extraordinary attestation which accompanies its entrance into the world, so the Protestant in the case of the Bible. In neither case is the evidence upon which the defence rests grounded in the nature of that which

What the future may have in store, in the way of new definition, is known only to God. Thus in various ways we find Catholic teachers shaping their arguments to meet the demands of the changing situation, so far as it can be done without giving up the fundamental principles upon which the structure of their faith is built. But whatever the variations of their position, they never abandon the contention that Christianity, as a supernatural institution, is raised above the standards which govern the rest of thought and life, and must be judged by canons of its own.

¹ *West. Conf.* i. 5.

it is designed to support. In both the proof is purely external.¹

Without at this point raising the question whether the argument from miracle is really able to secure the

¹ An excellent example of this view is found in Dean Mansel's famous Bampton Lectures on the Limits of Religious Thought (5th ed. London, 1867). Here the rejection of the internal evidence for Christianity is carried to an extreme. Mansel admits that man may judge as to the evidences of revelation. But when it comes to the content of revelation, moral and intellectual considerations alike fail. Conscience is as little to be trusted as reason. When once God has spoken, however irrational, or even unethical his requirements may seem, the only duty for man is instant submission (cf. especially pp. 145-148; Preface, pp. xviii, xix).

As a matter of fact, few Protestant theologians have been content to abide by this restriction. Taking its history as a whole, Protestantism has made much larger use of the internal evidence than Catholicism. Where the Vatican Council confines the rational evidence of revelation to miracle and prophecy, the *Westminster Confession* insists upon the inherent qualities of Scripture as "arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God" (i. 5). The doctrine of the witness of the Holy Spirit, with its recognition of the supreme rights of Christian experience, easily opens the door to the admission of this evidence, and the Biblical principle points in the same direction. The qualifications by which Catholicism limits its appeal to human reason do not obtain in Protestantism. Hence we find theologians of many schools interpreting the principles of the Reformation in such a way as to admit of a truly scientific apologetic. The uniqueness of Christianity is found in its possession of qualities appealing to the highest in man, and the proof of its absoluteness is sought by showing the completeness with which, on all sides of man's nature, it answers his questions, meets his needs, and satisfies his longings. With this general line of reasoning we shall have to do in another connection. Here it is sufficient to remark that, whatever its merits, it involves an abandonment of the principles with which we are here alone concerned, and makes it necessary to class those who practise it among the adherents of a different method. That which interests us here is not Protestant apologetic in general, but that particular type of it, which, starting from the older ontological conception of the Absolute inherited from Catholicism, agrees with the latter in basing its rational argument for Christianity upon the purely external evidences of prophecy and miracle.

universal assent which its advocates claim, it remains to inquire how far, granting its validity, it is able to give us the scientific definition of which we are in search. Here our answer must be an unfavorable one, and that on grounds very different from those which are commonly assigned.

In order to establish the scientific character of any definition, we have seen that two things are necessary. It must be universal, and it must be definite. That is to say, in the first place, the standard to which appeal is made must be one which is open to men in general, and not simply private or esoteric; and, in the second place, the qualities in which the distinctive character of the object is found must be stated with such clearness and precision as practically to admit the application of the test. If, then, it is a question of defining Christianity we must be able to show, first, that the standard to which we appeal is really one which admits a universal application, and secondly, that our definition is sufficiently clear and unambiguous to enable the test to be made. Is this possible in the present case?

Criticisms of what may be called the dogmatic conception of Christianity¹ are commonly based upon the first of these grounds. It is claimed that the supernatural evidence to which appeal is made is something of which science knows nothing, and which a large proportion of reasonable men reject. On the testimony of its own advocates religion is isolated from the

¹ We use the phrase as a convenient designation for all definitions, whether Catholic or Protestant, which take their departure from the ontological view of the Absolute.

rest of human life, and confined to a transcendent realm to which only the select company of the initiated possess the key. To talk of a scientific definition under such circumstances is to misuse words.

This argument, though plausible, fails to stand the test of serious examination. If universal assent at any particular time be the test of scientific truth, then science in every form is impossible. Not all men are in possession of the evidence, nor are all competent by habit and training to judge it even when presented. All that can reasonably be asked is that there should be no inherent obstacle in the way; that the evidence be open to him who is willing to take the trouble to qualify himself to approach it, and that in the case of those best fitted to make the test, actual agreement should have been reached. In the case of a definition of Christianity, therefore, all that needs to be shown is that the evidence is open to all men who choose to fulfil the conditions.

This is, in fact, what the advocates of the dogmatic view claim. The Christian apologist, whether Catholic or Protestant, is well aware that all men do not recognize the force of his evidence. But he maintains that good reasons can be given for their failure. Many causes are responsible, some intellectual, some moral. When these are removed, as through the results of Christian instruction and contact is constantly being done, the expected recognition follows. With the steady growth of the Christian church and the consequent extension of the Christian experience, the number of men who are open to the Christian evidences is

continually increasing, and it is only a question of time when the universal assent which science demands shall be reached.

We are not now concerned to inquire whether this hope is well founded. That is a matter which can only be determined by experience. One may take as unfavorable a view as one pleases of what is likely to be the outcome of such an experiment. Our present contention is simply that, so far as universal consent is concerned, there is nothing in the dogmatic conception of Christianity to render a scientific definition *a priori* impossible.¹

The real difficulty with the dogmatic conception of Christianity lies elsewhere. The trouble is not with the court of appeal, but with the use to be made of it when it is found. Definitions based upon the ontological conception fail because they are unable to express their conception of Christianity in sufficiently clear and unambiguous terms to admit of a scientific test, even before judges of their own choosing. This may seem a curious charge to bring. Indefiniteness is not usually thought to be the besetting sin of the dogmatist. When he is criticized, it is commonly for over rather than for under definition. Yet the two points are not so inconsistent as a superficial judgment might conclude. Too

¹ An exception must of course be made in the case of all theories which deny the possibility of a universal Christian experience. If, as in some forms of historic Calvinism, God be thought of as arbitrarily withholding from a part of mankind the knowledge of those facts concerning Himself upon which right thinking depends, it is not possible to appeal to any universally accepted standard, and a scientific definition of Christianity is therefore out of the question.

great detail may be as confusing as too little. It is the disposition, common to Catholic and Protestant alike, to extend the absoluteness of Christianity over the widest possible territory which is the parent of the indefiniteness of which we complain. True Christianity, we are told, is what the church teaches or what the Scriptures reveal. But what does the church teach? How far does the Biblical revelation extend? Here we find differences of opinion. The exegetes agree as little as the doctors. Nor is there anything either in the churchly or in the Biblical principle which of itself enables us to decide between them. That which in theory is claimed as the chief merit of each, its supernatural character, proves in practice its fatal weakness. The Absolute knows no difference of value or of degree. Yet without the recognition of such differences, how is it possible to secure the definiteness which is essential to scientific definition?¹

No doubt this indefiniteness is more apparent in the former case than in the latter. Here the vastness of the territory opens up a field for misunderstanding which is little less than appalling. It was not a Protestant controversialist, but her own great teacher, who said of the Catholic church that she was a *corpus permixtum*, containing within her capacious bosom both

¹ The lack of proportion thus criticized is admirably described by Phillips Brooks in his *Essay on Orthodoxy*. We quote a few sentences from the lengthy extract given by Dr. Allen in his *Life* (II. p. 491). "In the truths which it holds (orthodoxy) loses discrimination and delicate sense of values, holding them not for their truth so much as for their use or their safety; it gives them a rude and general identity, and misses the subtle difference which makes each truth separate from every

the good and the evil, the false and the true.¹ Strange bed-fellows have found themselves united by the tradition principle. To harmonize all the material which has received Catholic sanction would be an impossible task. If we are bidden to look to the decisions of the church, it is only to be met by new perplexities, for the councils themselves do not agree; or, what comes to the same thing for our present purpose, honest men have not yet been able to discover their agreement. The official definitions themselves need defining. When this has been done, there remains the task of reconciling the new dogma with the old; while still beyond crowds a circle of questions, more or less vital, upon which no decision has been reached. Thus we find that one who takes refuge from the strife of the schools in the bosom of the church Catholic, does not escape from uncertainties.² If we wish a clear definition of

other. Orthodoxy deals in coarse averages. It makes of the world of truth a sort of dollar store, wherein a few things are rated below their real value for the sake of making a host of other things pass for more than they are worth." What we are particularly interested in here is not so much the fact as the reason for it. It belongs to the very nature of the Absolute in which this temper of mind finds its ultimate reality that it should ignore those subjective and personal elements in which differences of value reside.

¹ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, iii. 32.

² An excellent illustration is to be found in the often-quoted passage from Cardinal Newman's *Apologia* (London, 1890, p. 238 *sq.*), in which he describes the state of his mind since entering the Roman church. The certainty in which he there represents himself as rejoicing is simply the clear perception that certainty is impossible. It is the peace which follows the abandonment of a hopeless quest. His answer to those who object to the doctrines of the church as unbelievable is their removal from the realm to which rational tests apply. Catholic doctrine, he tells us, deals not with phenomena but with substance. And substance is "what no one on earth knows anything about" (p. 240). Armed with this

essential Christianity, we must seek our answer elsewhere.

Nor is it otherwise with the Biblical principle. No doubt Holy Scripture furnishes a standard at once more definite and more manageable than tradition. But when it comes to defining essential Christianity, we find that its acceptance does not deliver us from uncertainty. The Bible is a large book. It extends over many centuries, and includes the most diverse matters. As to the meaning and relative importance of much that it contains interpreters are not agreed. The Westminster Confession bids us distinguish, within the teaching of Scripture, between certain weighty matters essential to salvation, and others less important about which good men may differ without peril.¹ But when we try to carry out this distinction in practice we find that it is by no means easy. What is essential, and what is unessential? This is the very point on which we find the widest difference of opinion. Here the

principle of "invincible ignorance," it is easy for him to accept the most mysterious dogmas, sure that no assault of human reason can penetrate to the inaccessible fortress within which they have withdrawn themselves for refuge. Does one object that transubstantiation is not true, since he has seen the bread, and its qualities remain unchanged? The Catholic doctrine "does not say that the phenomena go; on the contrary, it says that they remain; nor does it say that the same phenomena are in several places at once. It deals with what no one on earth knows anything about, the material substances themselves. And, in like manner, of that majestic article of the Anglican as well as of the Catholic creed,—the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. What do I know of the Essence of the Divine Being? I know that my abstract idea of three is simply incompatible with my idea of one; but when I come to the question of concrete fact, I have no means of proving that there is not a sense in which one and three can equally be predicated of the Incommunicable God."

¹ i. 6, 7.

Biblical principle fails us. For this simply asserts the infallible authority of all that Scripture contains, leaving each man free to interpret his authority as best he may. Calvinist and Arminian, churchman and individualist, rationalist and mystic, each appeals to the book in support of his own peculiar view of Christianity, and condemns those who differ from him as unbiblical. It would seem, then, that if we are to gain a satisfactory answer to our question some more definite test must be found.

Thus in both its great historic forms the dogmatic position proves itself unsatisfactory. The philosophical basis on which it rests is a realism which antedates the results of modern critical study. Its Absolute suggests problems rather than solves them. Judged on its own merits without prejudice, it is unable to give us a definition which, by reason of its clearness, conciseness, and general acceptance is worthy to be called scientific.¹

With the other two methods of approaching our problem we may deal more briefly. However different the conclusions to which they come, they move in the same general world of thought, and the question at

¹ It is hardly necessary to state that in thus criticizing the ontological conception of Christianity, we are far from denying the scientific value of the work done by many of those who have shared this view. The great theologians, Catholic and Protestant alike, have not been content with such general conceptions of Christianity as we have indicated. They have sought to discover on the basis of reason, history, and experience what were the distinctive features of their religion, and have set them forth and defended them with a clearness worthy of all praise. Our present contention is simply that so far as they have been successful in accomplishing their aim, it has been by ignoring the indefinite standards which are all that their philosophy allows, and seeking the definition of Christianity along other and less ambiguous lines.

issue between them admits of being very simply stated. Both the advocates of the mathematical and the psychological views are convinced that if the distinctive character of Christianity is to be found at all, it must be sought in the positive qualities which characterize it as a historic religion, and which are to be determined by the same methods of comparison which science employs in all other departments of research. The question is simply whether or no this inductive method is compatible with the recognition of the absoluteness of Christianity in any sense. Those who hold the mathematical view deny this; those who take the psychological view affirm it. The question, as we shall see, resolves itself into this: whether the conception of the Absolute is purely negative, or whether it has a positive significance which justifies its use in scientific discussion.

To those who take the former view, any attempt to conceive of the Absolute positively involves a contradiction in terms. As the ultimate reality, it lies back of experience, as the unapproachable goal, both of thought and of aspiration. It has its psychological foundation, as a necessary concept of the mind. And it may even be granted a certain objective reality, in that it is a fact that our finite and limited experience is set in the midst of the great ocean of the infinite. But — so far as we are concerned — the function of this unknown reality is purely negative. It is, as we have already seen, a concept of limitation; the mark of the boundary of our knowledge. So far as the latter advances, it recedes. Nor can any conceivable increase

of experience bring man to a positive knowledge of the infinite. Even if, with Mr. Spencer, we conceive this unfathomed region as the home of some mysterious being upon whom our finite universe depends, we are no whit better off. For of the nature of this mysterious something we can form no conception. The Absolute in all its forms is by definition unknowable.

It is clear that from this point of view an absolute religion is out of the question. On all sides of life, moral, intellectual, æsthetic, religious, man is shut up to the sphere of the relative. From our limited subjective point of view, we may compare things as better or worse, more or less true, more or less beautiful; but the distinctions have only relative validity, and are constantly being superseded and corrected by an enlarging experience. The several religions are natural phenomena in which, under the differing conditions in which he has found himself, and with more or less crudity and imperfection, man has endeavored at once to express and to deepen his sense of the mystery and the wonder of life. So far as they attempt positive interpretation they are all alike superstitious and inadequate; yet this does not hinder them from performing a useful function in human life. They are necessary steps in the evolution of humanity, and form an outlet for natural instincts which cannot but seek expression. To pick out one from the number of these partial and inadequate religions in order to raise it to a position of absolute supremacy is to be guilty of the greatest inconsistency.

We find those who take this position differing widely

in their positive estimate of Christianity. One regards it as a mere superstition, all the more dangerous because of its great age and many-sided associations; an enemy against which all right-minded men ought to unite in making war, and which in time is destined to be utterly overthrown and destroyed, in order to make way for the irreligion which is to be the religion of the future. Another recognizes in it the highest flower of human genius, sees in its doctrines symbols of profound spiritual truth, and cheerfully admits the extraordinary part which it has played in the betterment of society and the elevation of the race. Some even go so far as to bow reverently before its founder as the best and purest of the sons of men, and gladly unite with those who frequent its churches in the worship of that mysterious being whose counsels are unsearchable and His ways past finding out. But whatever may be the particular attitude taken to Christianity, it can never include the element of finality which absoluteness involves. Beautiful and helpful though it may be, Christianity is only a stage in the religious history of humanity, destined in time to be superseded by another, more helpful and more beautiful.

The weakness of this position lies in its exaggeration. It seizes upon one meaning of the term Absolute, and emphasizes it to the exclusion of others equally legitimate. What the advocates of the mathematical view tell us of the part played by the sense of mystery in religion is entirely in place, and no one is more ready to recognize it than the Christian. It is true that God is greater than our thought, and that all our knowledge is

set in the midst of a vast ocean of ignorance. Against all dogmatic efforts to stretch our knowledge beyond its proper limits the agnostic protest is in place. We need to be called down from the transcendental realm where theology has often made its home, and to be set to the more fruitful task of studying experience that we may learn what it has to teach us.

But it is a mistake to think that in coming back to experience we take leave of the Absolute. This common opinion rests on a failure to understand the real meaning of the term. By the Absolute we mean the ultimate reality, that in which thought and aspiration rest. This may be a positive conception as well as a negative one. Experience is full of ultimates. Force, law, reason, beauty, duty, personality, love; all of these are general conceptions in which thought may rest, and which, therefore, it is open to man to conceive as absolute. This is the truth for which the psychological view stands.

When, therefore, the advocates of the mathematical view tell us that an absolute religion is a contradiction in terms, we answer that we are not speaking about the same thing. They are thinking of that side of God which by definition can never be known. We are thinking of God, so far as He manifests Himself to human thought and experience. The Absolute which we seek to know is that which is absolute for us. We wish to discover, if possible, what that principle is which, so far as human experience goes, is final. To say that this is impossible is to prejudge *a priori* that which can only be determined as a result of experiment.

It is to rule out of court with a single stroke of the pen the entire enterprise upon which philosophy has been embarked from the beginning of time.

For what is philosophy, if it be not the search for the Absolute? In all its forms, from Anaxagoras to Hegel, it is the effort to discover what is the ultimate reality in the universe, and to define its nature in the simplest and clearest terms. Prove to man that this attempt is foredoomed to fail, and you cut the nerve of philosophic thought. At the basis of all large speculative endeavor lies a faith in the rationality of the world; and this, when properly understood, is only a different form of stating the knowability of the Absolute. To say that this is a rational world is to say that the ultimate principles by which it is governed lie within the reach of human reason. Even philosophers theoretically the most sceptical show by their practice that they share this faith. Thus Mr. Spencer, in the very same breath in which he speaks of the Absolute as unknowable, declares that it is cause and force,¹ and proceeds to set it about all manner of indispensable work in his universe. Even to say that the Absolute is unknowable implies the previous possession of a final standard of knowledge, and, so far forth, a positive acquaintance with the ultimate reality. Let a man try to think at all, and he will find it simply impossible to avoid a conception, more or less positive, of the Absolute. As he studies the universe and is drawn more and more under the spell of its wondrous unity and order, man feels himself in the presence of a single

¹ *First Principles* (New York, 1888) pp. 157, 171.

all-comprehending principle, and he cannot but believe that as he penetrates more deeply into the nature and meaning of life, he is at the same time coming to understand the nature of the supreme being who is its cause. Modern philosophy differs from ancient, not in the object of its search, but in its clearer perception of the difficulties in the way, and in its franker recognition of the subjective conditions through conformity to which alone success is possible.

What we have called the psychological conception of the Absolute is simply the new view of God which is the result of this conviction. It is the view which finds God in His world rather than outside of it; and seeks to gain an insight into the nature of the ultimate reality through the discovery of the permanent elements in the experience of man.

Approaching the problem in this spirit, we see at once that the Absolute may have two very different meanings according to our point of view. In the narrower sense, it denotes that principle which is final for the individual man. Each of us has his own standard, more or less clear and definite, his own conception, more or less crude, of the ultimate reality; in a word, his own Absolute. These several standards differ among themselves, and the reconciliation and overcoming of their differences is the problem of philosophy. The philosophic standpoint differs from that of the individual in that it attempts to rise above the various petty and local considerations by which each man's opinion is more or less determined to a region of truly universal judgments. The Absolute of philosophy is

won by abstracting from the several judgments of individuals all that is accidental and temporary. It is that principle or standard which is valid for man as man.

Applying these principles to our matter of the absolute religion, we see their bearing at once. By the absolute religion we mean a religion which is valid for man as man; one which meets every essential religious need, and satisfies every permanent religious instinct, and which, because it does this, does not need to be altered or superseded. Such a religion, if it could be found, would realize the idea of the absolute religion. The question of the absoluteness of Christianity in the philosophical sense is the question whether as a matter of fact Christianity can be shown to possess these characteristics.

In endeavoring to answer this question two points need to be considered; first, that of the abstract possibility of such a religion, and secondly, that of the method of its proof.

The first admits of a very short answer. Whatever one may think of the likelihood or unlikelihood of such a religion as a matter of fact, no reasonable man can deny its possibility. Among the various alternatives which the future presents, it is at least conceivable that it may include a religion which, by the richness and many-sidedness with which it meets the religious needs of man in general, shall prove itself, from the human standpoint with which we have here alone to do, ultimate.

Granting the possibility of such a religion, how is its existence to be proved? Here it is evident that the

appeal to history must be final. From the point of view of the individual man, his own religious experience may be sufficient. But so long as good men differ there is need of an appeal to some wider standard. Clearly in this case the only way in which the absolute religion could justify its claim would be for it to show itself absolute in fact. If its claim is a valid one, we should expect to find it drawing to itself the good and wise of all ages and races; to see them owning its supremacy, and winning out of its abundance unfailing supply for their deepest needs. Not until this victorious progress had reached its completion, and we beheld all men organized into a great brotherhood under the shelter of a single faith, would it be possible to speak of a proof of the absoluteness of any religion, which should be in the strict sense scientific.

But in the meantime, while the process is incomplete, what then? Are we shut up to uncertainties? Must we wait till the end of time before we make up our minds? Or if, discouraged by the shortness of our life, compared with the vast stage upon which the mighty drama is to be played out, we make a premature choice, must it be at the peril of our scientific standing? This is not the attitude which men take in other departments of life. The student of physical science is not deterred by the fact that his induction is not complete, from making his theory as to the ultimate reality which we call matter. Nor does the fact that his predecessors have made mistakes shake his faith that the problem may ultimately be solved, and that his work may have a share in bringing about the solution. Each new

statement, if founded upon honest study of the facts, brings the goal nearer, and narrows the range of inquiry within which the final solution is to be sought. In like manner of the ultimate religious problems. If there be a God, more and more clearly revealing Himself in the religious life of man, the effort to understand His revelation, and to determine wherein its distinctive features consist, cannot be hopeless. Especially must this be the case with those men who have found in some particular historic faith the key to the world problem, and the solution of the mystery of the individual human life. Possessed of such convictions, they are constrained to express them with all the clearness of which they are master, to relate them to other forms of thought and life, and to discover, and so far as may be to remove, the difficulties which have thus far kept others of their fellow men from so inspiring and uplifting an insight. Surely, if the absolute religion is ever to win the universal recognition which is its right, it must be through some such process as this.

Upon this problem some of the finest minds of Christendom have been at work for more than a century. Rejecting the dilemma presented to them both by the dogmatist and the agnostic, they have sought to show that on purely scientific grounds it is possible to maintain the finality of Christianity. Various influences have combined to lead them to this conviction. On the intellectual side, there is the belief that the idea of the Absolute is too deeply inwrought into human life and thought to be ignored, together with the resulting desire to gain a conception of it which shall avoid the

crass dualism of ordinary dogmatic theology, with its sharp antithesis between the natural and the supernatural. On the religious side, there is the conviction that Christianity stands for truths too lofty, and experiences too precious, to be put on a par with those of any other religion, however worthy, together with the resulting desire to find some way to express this uniqueness, which shall not do violence to the intellectual standards which govern the rest of life. But whatever the special interest which leads to the endeavor, they agree in striving to justify the claim of Christianity to a unique position by calling attention to certain definite characteristics which separate it from all other known religions. Or, to put the matter in another form, they attempt a scientific definition of Christianity which shall include its absoluteness.

This being the case, the subject with which the present essay deals becomes of the highest importance. The history of the attempt to define Christianity scientifically is at the same time the history of the effort to determine what are the permanent elements in historic Christianity which justify its absolute claim. The two things stand or fall together. If we cannot discover what Christianity is, it is hopeless to try to defend it.

CHAPTER II

THE ANCIENT CHURCH

IN the technical sense the problem of the definition of Christianity is a modern one. It is one of the fruits of the scientific spirit, and its entire history may be compressed within the limits of a single century. But none of our present problems, however recent in its modern phrasing, is without its antecedents in the past. Long before men had mastered the methods of science, as we conceive it, they had asked questions as to the nature of Christianity, and sought to distinguish it from other forms of religion. Two such periods of questioning may be specially noted : — the first, that of the birth of Christianity, when the problem was to distinguish the new religion from the mother stock from which it was sprung ; the second, that of the Reformation, when, for a Christianity grown corrupt and base, men sought to substitute a new religion, worthy of the name falsely usurped by the old. A brief review of the results reached in the two periods will prove, not merely interesting in itself, but the indispensable background against which to set the more modern statement of the problem.

1. *The Apprehension of the Problem.*

To the early disciples Christianity presented itself as essentially a reformed Judaism.¹ Jesus declared that He was not come to destroy but to fulfil (Matt. v. 17). He Himself observed the Jewish law (Matt. xxiii. 3), appealed to the Jewish Scriptures (Luke iv. 21), and claimed to be the Messiah for whom His fellow-countrymen looked (Matt. xxvi. 64). Even after His death the contact with the mother religion remained unbroken.² The temple was the gathering-place for the Jerusalem Christians (Acts ii. 46 ; iii. 1 ; xxi. 26), and in remoter regions the Synagogue was the point of departure for the growing Christian propaganda (Acts xiv. 1 and often). The idea that there might be a Gentile Christianity free from the law, and with traditions and habits of its own, won its way slowly, and only after bitter opposition (Acts xv. 1 ; Gal. ii.). Even Paul recognized the peculiar prerogatives of his fellow-countrymen (Rom. ix. 4), and strove with a special zeal to win them to the service of a Christ, who was theirs not only according to the flesh but according to the promise (Rom. ix. 5-8 ; 1 Cor. ix. 20 ; Rom. x. 1). It is not strange, therefore, that we find Romans like Gallio (Acts xviii. 12 sq.) ignoring the difference between Judaism and Christianity,

¹ Cf. Acts i. 6, and in general the picture given of early Christianity in the discourses in Acts. Strong indirect evidence is afforded by the strenuous opposition with which Paul's preaching was met on the part of an influential section of the church. Cf. especially Gal. i. and ii.

² On the nature of primitive Christianity cf. McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, pp. 37-112 ; Stevens, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 259 sq. ; Gould, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 54, 55, and literature there cited ; Holtzmann, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, I. p. 349 sq.

and seeing in the latter only a corruption or variation of the former.¹

And yet the new religion, however modest in its beginnings, bore hidden in its bosom a principle of its own. Jesus was more than a reformed Jew. He was the founder of a universal religion.² Little by little

¹ The first clear recognition of Christianity as a distinct religion meets us about the time of the Neronian persecution. Tacitus (*Annals*, xv. 44), distinguishes Christians from Jews as a separate sect, though he evidently knows very little about them. The same is true of Suetonius (*Vita Neronis*, xvi.), where Christianity is designated by name as "*superstitio nova ac malefica*." Yet, if we take the famous passage in the *Vita Claudii* ("*Judæos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit*," xxv.) as referring to Christ, it would seem to show that the distinction was not always maintained. In Pliny's day the independence of the Christians is already clearly marked (*Letters*, x. 96).

² The question as to Jesus' view of the future of His Gospel has been much debated recently. On the whole the consensus of the best opinion is in favor of the view that He distinctly contemplated a breach with the existing Jewish religion similar to that which was actually brought about by Paul. Some scholars (*e. g.* Holtzmann, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, I. p. 130 sq.) hold that He only came to this view gradually, as the impossibility of realizing a universal religion in Judaism made itself clearly felt; but the fact itself seems too plain to be denied.

As bearing on this question are to be noted:

(a) Jesus' freedom in handling the Old Testament, as well as the various rabbinic interpretations which had grown up about it (*e. g.* Matt. v. 38, 39; Matt. xix. 8; Mark vii. 15).

(b) His consciousness of the great contrast between His Kingdom and the older dispensation (*e. g.* Matt. ix. 16, 17, the new wine, and the old wine-skins, the new patch and the old garment; Matt. xi. 11; Luke vii. 28: He that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist).

(c) His attitude to those who stood outside of Judaism (*e. g.* the Samaritan, Luke xvii. 17-19; the Syrophœnician, Matt. xv. 21-28; the Roman, Matt. viii. 10-13). His test was moral and spiritual, and therefore universally applicable.

(d) His distinct anticipation of the end of Judaism (the prophecy of the destruction of the temple, Mark xiii. and parallels).

(e) Perhaps the clearest expression of Jesus' sense of the newness of

the revolutionary character of His teachings made itself felt, and the bonds which united His disciples to their brethren of an older dispensation were strained to the breaking. The New Testament shows us a Christianity slowly coming to self-consciousness.¹ The process was an uneven one, more rapid in some places than in others, yet everywhere as inevitable as the tide in its rise. In Antioch the separation of the new sect first expressed itself in a name. "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts xi. 26). Christians — Christ men, followers and disciples of Jesus who claimed to be the Christ — this is the word with which the definition of Christianity begins.² The breach is made, and it only remains to study its nature, and to map it out upon the spiritual chart. This is the task upon which we find Christian teachers engaged within twenty years after the death of the Master.

Wherein consists the newness of Christianity? What is the principle which differentiates it from the Jewish

His Gospel is given in connection with the institution of the Lord's Supper, the new covenant taking the place of the old (Luke xxii. 20; Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark xiv. 24; 1 Cor. xi. 25).

On Jesus' relation to Judaism, cf. Wendt, *Lehre Jesu*, II. pp. 329-356, Eng. tr. II. pp. 1-35; Holtzmann, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, II. pp. 130-160; Stevens, *Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 17-26; McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, pp. 25-27; Gould, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, p. 27 sq.; Bruce, *Kingdom of God*, pp. 63-84; Gilbert, *The Revelation of Jesus*, chap. i. Special monographs on Jesus' relation to the Jewish law are: MacIntosh, *Christ and the Jewish Law*, 1886; Schürer, *Die Predigt Jesu Christi in ihrem Verhältniss zum alten Testament und zum Judentum*, 1882; Bousset, *Jesu Predigt in ihrem Gegensatz zum Judentum*, 1892; Jacob, *Jesu Stellung zum mosaischen Gesetz*, 1893. Cf. also the monographs on the *Kingdom of God* by Issel, Schmoller, J. Weiss, et al.

¹ Cf. Stevens, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 259.

² Cf. *Encyclopædia Biblica*, art. on "Name of Christian."

religion with which it has so much in common? To this question we find not one answer, but many. We may select as typical three examples: 1, the answer of Paul; 2, the answer of the Epistle to the Hebrews; 3, the answer of the Epistle to Barnabas. Along one or other of the paths blazed by these pioneers the later development has run.

2. *The Answer of Paul.*¹

Of the three the answer of Paul is the most radical.² None apprehended more clearly than he the contrast between Christianity and all preceding forms of religion. Heartily as he recognized the supernatural character of the Jewish religion (Rom. ix. 4, 5), loyally as he accepted its Scriptures as the revelation of God (Rom. iii. 2; cf. ix. 4), to him it was as impotent to realize the divine ideal as the Gentile religion upon which it was wont to look down. Of our modern classification based on the distinction between the natural and the supernatural he knows nothing. Instead of classifying Judaism and Christianity together as supernatural religions over against all forms of natural religion, as was the fashion not long ago in our apolo-

¹ On the theology of Paul, consult McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, p. 113 sq.; Gould, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, p. 58 sq.; Holtzmann, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, II. pp. 1-225, especially pp. 214-218; Stevens, *Pauline Theology*, p. 160 sq.; Cone, *Paul, the Man, the Missionary, and the Teacher*, p. 179 sq.; Pfleiderer, *Paulinismus*², p. 79 sq., p. 293 sq.; Ménégos, *La Pêché et la Rédemption d'après S. Paul* (1882); Bruce, *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity* (1894); Sabatier, *L'Apôtre Paul*, p. 287 sq.; Harnack, *Wesen des Christentums*, p. 110 sq., Eng. tr., p. 176 sq.; also the article on Salvation, in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. IV.

² *I. e.* theoretically. Practically (in its attitude toward Judaism as a historic religion) Barnabas is the most radical.

getic literature, he draws the line of cleavage elsewhere. Christianity, as the religion of grace, is contrasted with all others, whether natural or supernatural, as religions of law (Rom. iii. 19-30). The newness of Christianity consists in the fact that through Jesus Christ its founder there has been introduced into the world a new divine principle, a power of God unto salvation, realizing the ideal of divine sonship as no preceding religion has been able to do (1 Cor. i. 23-31; Rom. viii., especially verses 14-16; Gal. iii. 1-5; iv. 5-7; v. 22-24).¹

¹ The Pauline theology is so many sided that no complete statement can here be attempted. Those features which seem to have the most direct bearing upon the present discussion are as follows :

(a) To Paul Christianity means primarily the possession of a new spiritual life, whose marks are righteousness, sonship (*i.e.* filial trust), love, freedom. This life is due to union with Christ, or, to put it in another form, to the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ, which again is mediated by faith.

(b) In contrast to this, the life of the unredeemed is described as a state of death, of enmity with God, and of bondage to the flesh, whose inevitable end is total destruction.

(c) This new life is made possible through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the heavenly man, the second Adam, who is identified, especially in the later Epistles, with the creative and sustaining principle in the universe. While in God's purpose from the first, redemption is realized historically at a definite point of time, through the incarnation of the Christ, which thus becomes the turning-point of human history.

(d) The significance of the historic Christ consists partly in the fact that He reveals the mystery of God's purpose, hitherto unknown, partly in the fact that He makes possible its accomplishment by overcoming sin through His death and resurrection.

(e) Yet the work of Christ is not fully accomplished during His earthly life for (1) there remains some sin in the individual, only to be overcome at the Parousia, when the flesh shall be utterly destroyed; and (2) there is to be a progressive growth of the kingdom on earth through the conversion of Gentiles and Jews, till the number of the elect is made up. Cf. especially Paul's philosophy of history in Rom. ix.-xi.

Thus it appears that Paul not only has a clear conception of Christianity

This does not mean, of course, that Paul denies a preparation for Christianity in the past. For all its newness, it does not come into the world unannounced. Through promise and prophecy God has lighted up the darkness of pre-Christian history, pointing the way to better days to come (Rom. iii. 21 ; iv. 3 ; cf. verse 6 ; ix. 4, 25, 29, 33 ; xi. 26 ; 1 Cor. ii. 9 ; 2 Cor. vi. 2 ; Gal. iii. 8). He has so made men that, apart from Christ, they groan in bondage, feeling themselves made for better things than of themselves they have power to realize (Rom. vii.). In some, as in Abraham, the Spirit of Christ gives foretastes of the true life of faith, revealing a better principle than that of law (Rom. iv. 1 ; cf. 1 Cor. x. 4 ; Gal. iii. 6-9). But in general the religious preparation of the world is negative rather than positive.¹ The substance

as a historic religion, but of the historic Christ as the centre of Christianity. Cf. on this latter point Holtzmann, *op. cit.* II. p. 217.

¹ It is interesting to study Paul's view of the religious preparation of the world for Christ. Sharply as he makes the contrast between Christ (by which he means the historic Christ) and all that precedes (Rom. xvi. 25, 26 ; 2 Cor. iii. 6 ; Gal. iv. 4 ; Eph. i. 9, 10 ; iii. 5 ; Col. i. 26), he yet recognizes various lines of preparation. There is

(1) An eternal purpose, which includes the specific choice of some men, and runs through all history.

(2) A definite revelation in the form of promise and prophecy of the Christ to come. This antedates the law, and is wrought into it (circumcision a seal of Abraham's faith before the law).

(3) A nature capable of receiving Christ and restless without Him. This appears from Rom. vii.

(4) The entire legal dispensation as a negative preparation for Christ.

(5) An actual participation in the person of Abraham of the righteousness of faith.

(6) Back of all is the activity of the pre-existent Christ. Cf. esp. 1 Cor. viii. 6 ; x. 3, 4.

In view of these facts we must be careful not to exaggerate the nega-

of all the religions, Jewish as well as Gentile, is a legal righteousness as unattainable as it is lofty (Rom. iii. 19, 20). Wherever it is found, law is but a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ (Gal. iii. 24), a revelation of need rather than a power able to satisfy need. Only when we rise to the heights of a true philosophy, and see all things in their large relations, do we perceive that law too has its divine function as part of the great process by which God is training mankind for the higher life of the kingdom of God (Gal. iii. 23-iv. 7; Rom. ix.-xi). Looked at from this point of view, as the end for which the universe exists, Christianity is to Paul as old as the creation (Eph. i. 9, 10; Col. i. 17). But as a historic religion contrasted with others it is wholly new (Gal. iv. 4).

It is not possible here, nor is it necessary, to enter into the theology of Paul. Interesting as are the questions which may be raised as to the meaning of justification by faith, as to the nature of Christ's person, and the significance of His atonement, their answers do not affect the substance of Paul's teaching, so far as it alone concerns us here. To Paul, we repeat, the newness of Christianity consists in the fact that through Christ there has entered into the world a new power, able to realize, and progressively realizing, in men that life

tive features in Paul's view of the pre-Christian preparation. Side by side with the law and the current legalistic religion (Judaism, Gal. i. 14), in which he had been trained, there was the wider positive preparation, which included not merely the promise, but also some foretastes in experience, on the part of chosen individuals, of God's fatherly and forgiving grace.

of filial dependence upon God in holiness and love which is at once the ideal of religion and the end for which the world exists. Sharing this life, one becomes possessor here and now of a new divine nature (2 Cor. v. 17), and the glories still to be revealed in the future are only the outworking of spiritual principles and forces already active in present Christian experience (Rom. viii. 11). Thus the absoluteness of Christianity to Paul centres in the person of its founder. In Him is revealed the mystery of God which had been hidden from the foundation of the world (Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. iii. 5); through Him is realized the purpose of God in the creation of a spiritual society, whose bond of union is the possession of a divine life like that of Christ (Rom. viii.; 1 Cor. xii. 12 sq.; Eph. iv.).

3. *The Answer of the Letter to the Hebrews.*¹

The writer to the Hebrews also emphasizes the newness of Christianity (viii. 6; xii. 24). To him, as to Paul, there is a sharp contrast between Judaism and Christianity (i. 1, 2). But, unlike Paul, he makes the contrast, not between the positive and the negative, but between the partial and the complete (viii. 1-13; ix. 23; x. 1). What the institutions of Israel imperfectly

¹ On the theology of Hebrews, consult McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, p. 463 sq.; Ménégos, *La Théologie de l'Épître aux Hébreux*; Riehm, *Der Lehrbegriff des Hebräerbriefs*; Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*; Stevens, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 483 sq., especially p. 490 sq.; Gould, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, p. 160 sq.; and especially Holtzmann, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, II. pp. 281-308.

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shadowed forth (viii. 5), that Christ has clearly revealed. He is the fulfilment of which they were the prophecy, the completion of which they were the beginning.¹ So far as they went, they were right (v. 4); and so far as they went, they were effective (ix. 13). They offered a genuine even though a limited salvation. They could and did purify from ceremonial defilement (ix. 10, 13); but for sin they could not atone (ix. 9). Hence the need of Christ, the great High Priest (iv. 14), the author of an eternal salvation (v. 9), the one in whom all the hopes of the past are realized and all its longings satisfied (iv. 14-16). To the writer to the Hebrews the newness of Christianity consists in the fact that it provides this perfect Saviour (v. 9; cf. verse 2; vii. 16), and the absoluteness of Christianity is found in the perfection of the salvation which He brings (ii. 3; ix. 12); the fact that after Christ there remains no higher principle still to be revealed (vi. 4-8; vii. 28; ix. 12, 26, "once for all"; x. 10, 12; x. 26; xiii. 8).²

¹ Cf. Holtzmann, *op. cit.* p. 300. "Letzteres (das Werk des Christus) besteht einfach in Herstellung und Verwirklichung dessen, was durch die Schattenbilder der alttest. Sühnanstalt angedeutet war, und die Beweiskraft der ganzen Argumentation reicht genau ebenso weit, als die Ueberzeugung von der göttlichen Herkunft des mosaischen Opfercultus (cf. ix. 22), von der sühnenden Kraft des Opferblutes, und von der typischen Bedeutung des Opferrituals reicht," etc.

² The conception of Christianity in the Letter to the Hebrews differs from that of Paul in several important particulars. Perhaps the most noticeable is the greater stress laid upon the eschatological. To its author salvation lies wholly in the future, as a prize to be won through faithfulness and obedience. The element of mystic union with Christ on which Paul lays so much stress is not emphasized. Hope rather than experience is the dominant note of the letter. Faith is trust in God's

It is clear that, in spite of all differences of detail, the answers of both Paul and the writer to the Hebrews belong to the same general class. Both regard Christianity as a distinctly new religion. Both see in it a higher stage in the religious history of mankind. Both connect the advance with the person and work of its founder. For both the absoluteness of Christianity centres in the person of Christ.¹

promise rather than vital union with the present Christ. Christ is Saviour because

(a) He reveals God's will as the prophets did not (i. 1, 2).

(b) He makes the one perfect sacrifice for sin (x. 12; vii. 28; ix. 12), But especially because

(c) Through the incarnation, with its brotherhood in temptation and suffering, He has become master of the world to come (ii. 5), and therefore can assure those who come to God through Him, the great High Priest, of eternal salvation (v. 9).

In answer to the question what is the relation of the new covenant to the old, the writer answers with Paul

(1) In God's purpose it antedates it (Melchizedek).

(2) The old is given to typify and to foreshadow it (cf. viii. 5; x. 1, the law a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things). The writer here conceives of the law more narrowly than Paul, as the Mosaic ceremonial law, and regards it as having a function which is positive as well as negative.

To the author of Hebrews, as to Paul, Christianity centres in the historic Christ. As to the fate of those before Christ, the writer does not speak clearly, though iv. 6 would seem to imply that they were responsible for their failure.

¹ The same is true in substance of the other great type of thought contained within the New Testament—the Johannine. In spite of the many points of similarity which may be pointed out between the treatment of the Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel, and that of the Letter of Barnabas (Cf. Holtzmann, *op. cit.* II. p. 356), it is yet true that in the main point at issue, John stands with Paul and Hebrews rather than with Barnabas. Not only does he contrast Christianity with all preceding revelations of God as the absolute religion (i. 17), but he recognizes an earlier if less perfect working of the Logos in history (Prologue), and expressly admits the divine authority and special prerogatives of

Very different is it with another class of answers. In these Christianity is regarded simply as the republication or explanation of a religion already fully revealed, but misunderstood. Christ is conceived less as a saviour than as a teacher, and a teacher of old truths at that. We may take the Letter of Barnabas as type of this class.

4. *The Answer of the Letter of Barnabas.*¹

The Letter of Barnabas is specially interesting because it is a definite discussion of the problem now under consideration. Its theme is the relation of Christianity to Judaism,² its practical aim to show what attitude Christians ought to take toward their former co-religion-

the Jewish religion (iv. 22). He agrees further with Paul and the writer to the Hebrews in the great importance which he attaches to the incarnation, and in his constant emphasis upon the true humanity of Christ. But a discussion of the Johannine theology lies beyond our present purpose.

Cf. Holtzmann, *op. cit.* II. p. 354 sq.; Stevens, *Johannine Theology*; McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, p. 487 sq.; Reuss, *Histoire de la Théologie Chrétienne*, II. p. 418 sq.

¹ On Barnabas, cf. the editions of Gebhardt and Harnack (*Patrum Apostolicorum opera* I. Pt. II. Lipsiæ, 1878); Funk (Tübingen, 1887); and Lightfoot and Harmer (*Apostolic Fathers*, London, 1891). Earlier editions by Müller (Leipzig, 1869); Hilgenfeld (1866, 1877²); and Cunningham (London, 1877).

Translations in the Ante-Nicene Fathers (ed. Coxe), Vol. I. p. 137 sq.; and in Lightfoot and Harmer, *op. cit.* p. 269 sq.

Cf. also Milligan in Smith and Wace, *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, I. p. 260; Harnack in Herzog, *Real Encyklopädie*³, II. p. 410 sq.; Lightfoot, *Epistle of Clement*, II. p. 503 sq.; Völter in *Jahr. für prot. Theol.*, 1888, p. 106 sq.; Harnack, *Geschichte der alt-christ. Litt.* I. p. 58 sq.; *Chronologie*, I. p. 410; J. Weiss, *Der Barnabasbrief*, Berlin, 1888.

For the earlier Bibliography, see Gebhardt and Harnack, *op. cit.* p. xl.

² Cf. chaps. ii.-iv.

ists.¹ In his treatment of both these questions the author goes a way of his own.²

To Barnabas there is no difference in principle between the religion of Christ and that of the Old Testament. They differ neither in kind nor in degree. There is but one religion, the Christian. It is a spiritual religion (iv. 11), without forms and ceremonies, without temple (xvi. 1) or sacrifices (ii. 4); a religion of obedience and sonship (iv. 9, 11; vi. 11), in hope of the promised salvation (vi. 9, 19) which Christ, the divine Saviour, who has abolished death by His sacrifice (v. 6), shall one day reveal. This spiritual religion, we repeat, the Old Testament clearly reveals, not merely in its essential principles, but in its details (chaps. vi.-xvi.). But the Jews, because of their sin (xiv. 1), and also in fulfilment of the divine purpose (xiii.), did not understand the Old Testament.³ They misinterpreted its teachings, did not conform to its precepts, and hence failed to enjoy its blessings. They took literally the precepts of the ceremonial law which required a spiritual (*i.e.* allegorical) interpreta-

¹ Cf. iii. 6. Yet note that the danger which the author has in mind is chiefly theoretical. It is that of a misunderstanding of the nature of the Christian law, rather than such an abandonment as threatens the Galatians to whom Paul writes.

² On the novelty of Barnabas' treatment, see Harnack, in Herzog, *op. cit.* p. 413, "Das AT — und das ist an sich noch nichts auffallendes — wird dem geschichtlichen Boden völlig entzogen, und als ein allein den Christen gehöriges Buch betrachtet: aber die konsequente Durchführung des Gedankens, die jüdische Verwertung des AT sei eine vom Teufel eingegebene Verdrehung desselben gewesen, ist dem Verfasser eigentümlich." Cf. *Chronologie*, I. p. 413.

³ x. 12: "But whence should they perceive or understand these things?"

tion.¹ Hence the Old Testament remained a sealed book in their hands until Christ came. The purpose of His coming was to disclose the meaning which had hitherto been obscured, to show that the Jewish claim to the possession of a divine covenant was a false one (iv.; xiii.; xiv.), and to transfer to His true people (the Christians) the blessings which are rightfully theirs (iv. 6; xiv. 4).²

It is clear that, in spite of superficial resemblances, this view of Christianity differs radically from both of those which we have been considering. To both Paul and the writer to the Hebrews, Christianity represents a distinctly higher stage in the development of religion. In both it succeeds true but imperfect forms. Both, therefore, have to face the question, What is the new which Christianity brings, and what is its relation

¹ The letter is devoted to showing this in detail. Cf. the case of the sacrifices (ii.), fasts (iii.), circumcision (ix.), unclean meats (x.), Sabbath (xv.), temple (xvi.).

² In his article on Barnabas in Herzog, *op. cit.*, p. 413, Harnack gives a favorable estimate of the Christianity of our letter. He goes so far as to say that no one of the Apostolic Fathers understood Paul's doctrine of salvation as well as Barnabas. With all recognition of the genuinely Pauline elements contained in his teaching (*e.g.* Christianity a spiritual religion of obedience and sonship; Christ not only teacher but saviour; recognition of the positive significance of Christ's death in bringing about salvation; Christians new creatures in Him, a spiritual temple in which God dwells, etc.), we cannot help feeling that it is easy to exaggerate the points of similarity. The truths to which we have referred are rather relics of an earlier type of thought preserved through reverence than integral elements in the author's own world of thought. Both the wide outlook and the historic sense of Paul are gone. Christianity is primarily law, not gospel; and salvation, which lies in the future, is conditioned upon obedience and may be lost. Here the letter is much closer to Hebrews than to Paul. But in the main point which here alone concerns us it differs from both.

to the old? This problem does not exist for Barnabas. By his uncritical identification of Christianity and (true) Judaism, and his denial to the latter in its historic forms of the relative right which both Paul and the author of Hebrews admit, he sweeps away all difficulties, and presents Christianity as the one true religion in absolute contrast to all preceding forms of religion as false. The elements of growth and progress so prominent in the teaching of the great apostle — it may be added, in the teaching of our Lord Himself — are overlooked or denied; and so the true significance of Christianity, as a historic religion, is obscured. There is but one religion, the Christian, which has existed unchanged from the beginning. The absoluteness of Christianity is the absoluteness of all divine truth, which, just because it is divine, is eternal and unchanging.

If we ask for the explanation of so strange a misconception meeting us thus early in Christian history,¹ it is not easy to give the answer. Doubtless many causes had their influence. The absence of the historic spirit which is so characteristic of the entire period with which we have to do, and which vitiates so much of the interpretation of exegetes otherwise learned and sincere; the self-consciousness of a church grown strong enough to stand upon its own feet, and arrogantly asserting its superior right to the Jewish Scriptures over those from whom it had first received them; above all, the idea, deep rooted in the philosophy of the time and the source of many errors, of God as the unchanging one, the Ab-

¹ The date of Barnabas is disputed. Lightfoot dates it early (between 70 and 79); Harnack (*Chronologie*) late (about 130).

solute, whose utterance is ever the same¹—all these causes, doubtless, with others less easy to recognize, worked together to bring the author to a position so far removed, both in justice and charity, from that of the earliest Christian teachers. But whatever the cause, the effect was disastrous. A view of Christianity so unhistorical could not but be the parent of many errors, and so indeed it proved.

The three answers which we have thus briefly passed in review are typical of the chief methods of treatment which meet us in the later history. On the one hand, we have the effort to conceive Christianity as a historic religion, and to reconcile belief in its absoluteness with a recognition of the relative right of other, though imperfect, forms. This in turn may take two forms, according as the religious preparation for Christianity is conceived (with Paul) as mainly negative, and Christ is thought of as having introduced into the world a type of religion which did not exist before, or as stress is laid (with the Letter to the Hebrews) on the positive elements in the pre-Christian preparation, and Christianity thought of as the completion and fulfilment of a religious ideal already partially, though imperfectly, known. On the other hand, we have the uncritical identification of historic Christianity with all true religion, and the denial of any right, even a relative one,

¹ Lightfoot (*Clement*, II. p. 504) calls attention to the Alexandrianism of the Epistle. While the speculative interest is subordinated to the practical, the world of thought out of which the letter comes is that familiar to the philosophical schools of Alexandria. For a later illustration, cf. Engelhardt, *Christentum Justins*, p. 253, and references, especially p. 255, "Justin lebt und webt," etc.

in other forms of faith. Where this is the case, instead of the historical method of Paul and the author of Hebrews, who seek to show the superiority of Christianity by comparing it in detail with earlier forms of religion, we have the affirmation of its absoluteness on *a priori* grounds, as an inference from the divine perfection, and the consequent denial of all elements of growth or progress in divine revelation. It is this latter method which has become characteristic of the type of thought which we know as Catholicism.

5. *The Catholic Conception of Christianity.*

One of the most striking facts in Christian history is the early disappearance of the Pauline conception of Christianity. With the growth of the Catholic church, and its assumption of authority and infallibility, other influences become controlling. The letters of Paul are canonized, but their teaching is misinterpreted or overlooked.¹ The view of Christianity which meets us in the writings of the Catholic Fathers tends more and more to follow the lines of the Letter of Barnabas.² There is but one religion, the Christian, which has existed unchanged from the beginning. The nature of this religion Christ and His apostles have clearly

¹ On the traces of Paulinism in the early church, cf. Harnack in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, I. "Geschichte der Lehre von der Seligkeit allein durch den Glauben in der alten Kirche."

² Barnabas is here used simply as a representative of the tendency which ignores the difference between the Old Testament and Christianity, and carries back the latter to the beginning of things. This view is consistent with great variety of treatment in detail.

revealed, and over it the church through her bishops and unchanging tradition stands guard. Whatever the church is and teaches, that is apostolic, eternal, Christian. The elements of growth and progress implied both in Paul and in the Letter to the Hebrews are lost sight of, and, what is worse, the significance of the historic Christ is obscured. To be a Christian means no longer to be a disciple of Christ, a partaker of the divine life which He imparts, but a son of mother church, dependent upon her for forgiveness and salvation, accepting as Christian whatever she has made known. Even so spiritual a man as Augustine is powerless to resist this conception of Christianity.

It does not fall within the scope of this essay to follow the rise of the Catholic conception in detail. Harnack has traced the steps in his *Dogmengeschichte*,¹ and it is not necessary to reproduce them here. The process was a gradual one, and marked by many survivals and inconsistencies. Among the writers of the second and third and even of the fourth centuries we still find much freedom in the treatment of Christianity. Not only does the positive conception vary,² but the relation of Christianity to Judaism is very differently conceived. The chief points of view represented are the following: —

1. That which regards Christianity as something

¹ Pt. I. Bk. II. chaps. i.-iii. Cf. also Loofs, *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 74 sq.; McGiffert, *Primitive and Catholic Christianity*, New York, 1893.

² Compare the realistic theology of Irenæus and the school of Asia Minor with the type of thought represented by Justin and the Apologists; or again, the Chiliasm of Tertullian with the spiritual eschatology of the Alexandrines.

absolutely new, and, with historical Judaism, rejects the Old Testament itself (*e.g.* Marcion and the Gnostics).

2. That which identifies Christianity and true Judaism, regarding the former as going back to the creation, and claiming the prophets and lawgivers of Israel as Christian teachers (so Justin, and the Apologists in general).

3. That which recognizes the divine revelation to Israel, yet regards it as belonging to a preparatory and lower dispensation (*e.g.* Irenæus).

4. That which regards historic Christianity itself as but a passing stage in divine revelation destined at last to be outgrown and superseded (*e.g.* Origen).

1. In Gnosticism¹ we have the contrast between Christianity and all preceding forms of religion expressed in the strongest terms. The God of the Old Testament, or Demiurge, is distinguished from the Supreme Being who has revealed Himself in Christ, and the authority of the Jewish Scriptures is rejected. If we would learn what is Christian, we must seek our information from the tradition of the apostles, preserved partly in the writings which bear their names, partly in the esoteric teaching of their disciples. It would carry us too far to enter into the details of the various Gnostic systems. Here it is sufficient to say that, for all their fantastic exaggeration, they represent a serious attempt to do justice to the uniqueness of Christianity as a historic religion.² This is equally true of Marcion, in whose

¹ On Gnosticism, cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Pt. I. Bk. I. chap. iv.

² Cf. Pünjer, *History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. tr., p. 11 sq.

sharp contrast between the Old Testament and the New, we find at once a reminiscence and an exaggeration of Paulinism.¹

2. Justin's² view of Christianity has many resemblances to that of Barnabas. Salvation is used in a purely eschatological sense. The great significance of revelation lies in the fact that it discloses the conditions upon the fulfilment of which salvation depends. Such revelation was given not merely by Christ, and by the Old Testament prophets who foretold His coming, but also by the Greek philosophers, who performed a similar function among the Gentiles.³ The operation of the Logos is universal, and those who have lived according to His teachings (as, for example, Socrates, Heraclitus, and many others) are Christians, even though they have been reputed atheists.⁴ As to the question why Christ's coming was necessary, since the teaching of prophets and philosophers was sufficient for salvation without Him, Justin has no clear answer. Engelhardt holds that the only answer consistent with his premises would be that the appearance of Christ sealed the truth of the prophets' words, and so gave them an authority which they could not else have obtained. Through Christ the Jewish Scriptures become in the strict sense Christian writings. Yet, in spite of his high estimate of the Old Testament, Justin has as little appreciation as Barnabas of the place held by the Jewish religion in the history

¹ On Marcion, cf. Harnack, *op. cit.* Pt. I. Bk. I. chap. v.

² On Justin, cf. Engelhardt, *Das Christentum Justins* (Erlangen, 1878), especially pp. 167 sq.; 210 sq.; 245 sq.

³ *Apol.* I. 20, 44.

⁴ *Apol.* I. 46; II. 10.

of redemption. So far as the Mosaic law is true, it is identical with Christ's teaching in the New Covenant. So far as it contains temporary and external precepts (*e. g.* circumcision, Sabbaths, feasts, etc.), it was given because of the hardness of the Jews' hearts, to mark the fact that they are not really the true people of God.¹ It follows from the unchangeableness of God that His teaching is ever the same.² Yet there is this difference between Christ and all earlier teachers, that in Him the whole Logos became incarnate, which gives to His teaching a completeness and finality which theirs had not.³

A like unfavorable view of the Jewish religion meets us in the epistle to Diognetus, where it is maintained that the entire sacrificial system was a mistake. The same is true of the other ceremonial provisions of the Jewish law (*e. g.* the distinction of meats, the Sabbath, circumcision, fasting, new moons, etc.), all of which are "ridiculous and unworthy of notice."⁴

Later apologists simply identify Christian doctrine with the teaching of the Old Testament, and see in the superior antiquity of the latter over the writings of the Greek philosophers a proof that the "Christian philosophy" is more ancient than that of the Greeks.⁵

¹ Cf. *Dialogue*, 16, 19.

² Cf. Engelhardt, *op. cit.* p. 253.

³ *Apol.* II. 10.

⁴ Cf. chaps. iii. and iv.

⁵ So Tatian, *Oratio*, 31, Moses more ancient than Homer; cf. 40; Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, III. 9, the Christian law in the Old Testament; 20, the superior antiquity of Moses; and of the prophets, 23, 26, and especially 29, "the antiquity of the prophetic writings and the divinity of our doctrine."

An interesting exception to this unhistorical method is found in Ari-

3. Of all the Catholic Fathers Irenæus¹ most clearly apprehended the question, What is new in Christianity? This was forced upon him by the Gnostic rejection of the Old Testament. In his answer to the question, he shows in a most interesting way at once his dependence upon Paul and his departure from his teaching.

According to Irenæus, there were several distinct covenants made by God. His estimate of their number varies. Sometimes he reckons four (Adam, Noah, [Abraham], Moses, Christ); more often only two. He regards the study of the differences between these as a legitimate subject for churchly (*i. e.* orthodox) Gnosis.² There is both agreement and difference. Yet the difference is only relative, since the two are "of the same nature."³

If we ask more particularly wherein consists the superiority of the New Covenant, we find several advantages. In the first place it is universal.⁴ Again, it includes a purification of the moral law revealed in the Decalogue, and its separation from the ceremonial elements with which it had been united in the Jewish dispensation.⁵ Finally, it brings with it the reward for which the saints in the Old Testament were obliged to

tides, one of the earliest of the Apologists. He distinguishes the Jews as approaching the truth "more than all the nations, especially in that they worship God, and not His works," yet maintains that "nevertheless they too erred from true knowledge" (14).

¹ On Irenæus, cf. the careful study of Werner, *Der Paulinismus des Irenæus* (in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. VI.), especially pp. 179-202 (*Die geschichtliche Stellung des Heilswerkes Christi*).

² *Contra Haer.* I. x. 3.

³ *Eiusdem substantiae*, IV. ix. 2. Cf. III. xii. 12.

⁴ IV. ix. 2.

⁵ IV. xiii. 1-4.

wait.¹ All of these are connected with the coming of Christ. Asked how he meets the Gnostic objection, *Quid igitur dominus veniens attulit?* He answers, *Cognoscite, quoniam omnem novitatem attulit semetipsum afferens.*²

To Irenæus, as to Paul, the ceremonial law is a school-master to bring the Jews to Christ. Yet when we examine more closely, the similarity is only external. Paul contrasts law and grace; Irenæus, the ceremonial and the moral law. The moral law was revealed to Abraham. Moses added the ceremonial law as a temporary matter because of the hardness of the Jews' hearts. Christ did away with ceremonies and restored the moral law in its purity as a law of freedom, by which henceforth man is to be justified.³ Irenæus knows nothing of justification in the Pauline sense; a justification by faith alone, apart from the works of the law. As has more than once been remarked of his Paulinism, "The hands are the hands of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob."⁴

¹ IV. xxxiv. 1. Cf. Werner, *op. cit.* p. 186.

² *Ibid.* Cf. Ignatius, *Ad Phil.* 9. "The priests likewise were good, but better is the high priest, to whom is committed the holy of holies; for to Him alone are committed the hidden things of God; He Himself being the door of the Father through which Abraham and Isaac and Jacob enter in, and the Prophets, and the whole Church; all these things combine in the unity of God. But the Gospel hath a singular pre-eminence in the Advent of the Saviour, even our Lord Jesus Christ, and His passion and resurrection. For the beloved prophets in their preaching pointed to Him; but the Gospel is the completion of immortality." (Lightfoot's tr. Apostolic Fathers, 1891). Cf. also *Ad Magn.*, 10, where we find the earliest use of the word *χριστιανισμός*.

³ IV. xxxiv. 4, *vivificatrix lex*.

⁴ Werner, *op. cit.* p. 202.

4. Still a different position is held by Origen.¹ Summing up in his own person all the tendencies of that many-sided age, he weaves them into a unity, which is as striking as it is original. Against the Gnostics he maintains the importance of historic revelation, and defends the Old Testament as one step in the process of God's self-communication to man.² With Irenæus he admits that the revelation of Christ is a higher stage in that communication.³ But to him Christ Himself is not final. However important it may be for men to accept Him as Saviour, and to believe the truths which He taught, and to which the church in her dogmas

¹ On Origen, besides the older works of Redepenning and Thomasius, cf. Bigg, *Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford, 1886), p. 115 sq.; Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Pt. I. Bk. II. chap. vi.; Allen, *Continuity of Christian Thought* (Boston, 1890), chap. i. p. 70 sq.; Denis, *De la Philosophie d'Origène* (Paris, 1884).

² Origen distinguishes four stages of divine revelation. Three of these are past, the law of nature, the law of Moses, and the Gospel. "A fourth is still to come. It is the Eternal Gospel." (Bigg, p. 207 and note.) In his view of the first two he agrees with his master, Clement. (Cf. *Strom.*, I. 5, where we read that "philosophy was a schoolmaster to bring the Hellenic mind, as the law, the Hebrews, to Christ.") Yet as compared with Clement he had a less favorable view of what had actually been accomplished through the preparatory revelations. This is especially noticeable in his estimate of Greek philosophy. Cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*³, Vol. I. p. 605 and note, Eng. tr. II. p. 334.

³ This is the more remarkable since Origen's doctrine of a double standard would seem to reduce Christ in substance to the level of other teachers. It is the distinction of the Gospel, on the one hand from eternal truth, on the other from its preparatory stages, which is characteristic in Origen's teaching. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.* I. p. 610, "Aber das Neue was weder Celsus noch Porphyrius anerkennen konnten, liegt darin, dass die eine Religion auch in ihrer mythischen Form als einzigartig und göttlich anerkannt ist, und darauf gedungen wird, dass alle Menschen, soweit sie nicht zur höchsten Erkenntniss gelangen können, sich dieser mythischen Religion und keiner anderen zu unterwerfen haben." [Eng. tr. II. p. 340.]

bears witness,¹ it is a mistake to rest upon these as though they were God's last word. As a matter of fact, they are but symbols of eternal truths, elementary lessons designed for the help of the many, till through the instruction of the divine Logos they have been initiated into that Gnosis which is the privilege of the perfect.² Thus side by side with the law and the Gospel, Origen recognizes as the supreme revelation of God, a new eternal Gospel, and regards historic Christianity itself as but a passing stage destined at last to be superseded and outgrown.³

It is to Origen more than to any other single man that the church owed her victory over Gnosticism. This was due to the fact that he opposed it not from without, by force, but from within, with the subtler weapons of understanding and sympathy. It was because he had spiritually appropriated the elements of truth in Gnosticism that he was able to expose its exaggeration and error. But here, as so often, the defender of the faith proved unable to maintain his own orthodoxy. The church which had profited by the services of the great apologist to establish herself upon new heights of intellectual security made haste to throw down the scaffold by which she had mounted. Origen's distinction between historic faith and eternal truth proved as unacceptable as the more pronounced dualism

¹ On the place held by the creed in Origen's system, cf. the Introduction to the *De Principiis*.

² Cf. *Celsus*, iii. 78; *Comm. in Joh.* i. 9 (ed. Lommatzsch I. p. 20).

³ We shall meet the same thought more than once again (*e. g.* in the Middle Ages, in Joachim of Floris, and in Nicholas of Cusa; in more modern times, in Lessing).

of the Gnostics, and more and more essential Christianity came to be identified with the existing institutions and dogmas of the Catholic church.

Nor was this all. With the rejection by the church of the Gnostic depreciation of the Old Testament, and its union with the New as part of a single codex of divine revelation, the sense of the relative right and significance of the Jewish economy tended more and more to fall into the background. The question so clearly raised by Irenæus as to the difference between the Old and the New Testaments, and the reason for the superiority of the second over the first, had less and less interest for his successors. More and more the view-point of Justin and of Barnabas becomes controlling, and Christianity, which, in all its essentials is conceived to be clearly revealed in the Old Testament, is carried back to the very creation of the world. The classical illustration of this is to be found in the great text-book of Catholic Christianity, Augustine's "City of God."¹

The "City of God" is all the more instructive because it is in form a historical work. In it Augustine proposes to recount the history of the two opposing powers which since the beginning of time have contended

¹ On Augustine cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte* ², Vol. III. chaps. iii. and iv. and especially the note on p. 112 *sq.* Eng. tr. V. p. 125 *sq.* The reason why the historic Christ plays so small a role in Augustine's doctrine lies in the fact "dass Augustin bei allem Fortschritt in der Erkenntniss den Fortschritt zur Geschichte doch nicht gemacht hat. Der grosse Psychologe ist noch blind dafür gewesen was geschichtliche Entwicklung ist, was die Person in der Geschichte leistet, und was die Geschichte der Menschheit geleistet hat," (p. 114, Eng. tr. V. p. 126). On Augustine's philosophy of history, cf. Flint, *History of the Philosophy of History* (New York, 1894), p. 152 *sq.*

for the supremacy of the universe — the City of God and the City of Satan. Here, if anywhere, we might expect to find a clear recognition of the different stages in religious development and above all, an indication of the distinctive features which have entered into the world through Christ. But any such expectation is destined to disappointment. The Christianity whose history is here recorded knows no progress. From the beginning it has existed substantially unchanged. It is defined in terms taken from the Old Testament.¹ Its members are not merely patriarchs and prophets, but also devout heathen.² When Christ came its name was changed, but its substance remained the same.³ While the necessity of Christ's mediation was revealed to the heathen as well as to the Jews,⁴ His coming made no real difference in the status of men. For us, as for the men of an earlier dispensation, salvation still lies in the future. The city of God is in heaven, not on earth. The church is only a faint type of the glories that shall be. In comparison with the life to come, that which we now live is "most wretched, be it filled with all blessings of body and soul and external things,"⁵ and our present peace is "rather a solace of our misery than the positive enjoyment of felicity."⁶

So far as the positive conception of Christianity is concerned we find within Catholicism two great types

¹ xi. 1.

² xviii. 47.

³ *Retrac.* I. xiii. 3: "Res ipsa quæ nunc Christiana religio nuncupatur, erat apud antiquos, nec defuit ab initio generis humani, quousque ipse Christus veniret in carne, unde vera religio, quæ iam erat, cœpit appellari Christiana."

⁴ xviii. 47.

⁵ xix. 20.

⁶ xix. 27.

of thought, that of the Greek church and that of the Latin. In the former¹ Christianity is conceived physically rather than ethically, as a new divine nature, immortal and incorruptible, of which one becomes partaker through the sacraments, and by the possession of which one is delivered from the corruption of this world and assured of a life of endless bliss hereafter.² The great interest in the doctrines of the Trinity and the Person of Christ is explained by the fact that they centre in the Incarnation; that extraordinary event through which this impartation of divine life is conceived to be accomplished.³ Here we have a reminiscence of the earlier Christian view in which the person of the historic Christ is central. Yet in the later development, this primitive significance tended more and more to be lost. The doctrines are conceived as mysteries rising above reason, to be accepted because of the testimony of tradition, irrespective of their content.⁴ With the growing complexity of dogma, it became increasingly difficult for the plain man to understand its meaning, and the ethical and rational elements

¹ On the conception of Christianity in the Greek church, cf. Harnack, *Wesen des Christentums*, p. 119 sq., Eng. tr. p. 217 sq. and the appropriate sections of his *Dogmengeschichte*; Dorner, *Dogmengeschichte*, pp. 221-239; Kaftan, *Wesen des Christentums*, p. 359 sq.; *Dogmatik*, p. 64 sq.; Sabatier, *Philosophie de la Religion*, p. 232 sq.

² Cf. Ignatius, *Ad Eph.* 20, "breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote that we should not die but live forever in Jesus Christ." Cf. also *Ad Polycarp* 2, "The prize is incorruption and life eternal."

³ This soteriological interest is especially apparent in Athanasius.

⁴ A good illustration is to be found in the fate of the Antioch Christology, in which a more historical conception of the person of Christ succeeded for a time in maintaining itself.

so prominent in the earlier theology fall more and more into the background.¹ Religion resolves itself for earnest men into a mystic communion with God mediated through the sacraments,² and in place of the historic Christ we have the Catholic church, as a divinely appointed institution, set to mediate a supernatural salvation to men otherwise helpless and hopeless.

In Roman Catholicism³ the significance of the church is still further emphasized. Even the dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation are subordinate to the great dogma of the Church. To be a Christian means to be a submissive son of mother church, receiving at her hand whatever she may be pleased to impart. When we look more closely at the salvation thus mediated, we note several interesting points of difference. Greater stress is laid on the active virtues than is the case with the Greek church. To the Latin salvation, which lies wholly in the future, is a reward to be won through fidelity and obedience. It is not present experience of salvation which the church guarantees, but the promise of such experience in the future.⁴ With this goes an increasing disposition to conceive of salvation in terms of law. The church is a legal institution which guarantees rights, and the supreme Christian duty is to dis-

¹ Cf. the *De Fide Orthodoxa* of John of Damascus—the typical example of Greek scholasticism.

² Cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Pt. II. Bk. I. chap. x.

³ On Roman Catholicism, cf. Harnack, *Wesen des Christentums*, pp. 153–167, Eng. tr. p. 246 sq.; and the appropriate sections of his *Dogmengeschichte*; Dorner, *Dogmengeschichte*, pp. 350–394; Kaftan, *Dogmatik*, p. 68 sq.

⁴ Cf. the passages already cited from Augustine's *City of God* (xix. 20, 27).

cover and to occupy the proper attitude to the final court of appeal.¹ In general we may say that the intellectual elements still so prominent in the Greek conception fall into the background, and are replaced by others that are ethical. Sin is guilt rather than corruption, and salvation forgiveness rather than change of nature.² Yet for Latin no less than for Greek, the sense of Christianity as a distinct historical religion is gone. Christ Himself is no longer the Jesus of the Synoptics, or even the heavenly man of Paul, with whom we become one by faith, but the creator of the church, through which alone God is to be approached, and which, as we have seen from Augustine's "City of God," goes back to the beginning of things.

It is true that on this common basis we find widely different views. Some writers still emphasize the ethical elements of Christianity. Others lay chief stress upon the sacraments with their mysterious efficacy. To some Christianity is a new law; to others it is a divine life, of which man becomes a partaker through ecclesiastical mediation. Into the churchly conception, many elements of apostolic teaching are taken up, and in forms more or less distorted and inadequate, handed down as seeds of new life for the future. Add to this the ceaseless change which is the accompaniment of all growth, even if its subject be the church Catholic, and you find that the content of that which men call Christianity varies

¹ This appears notably in connection with the penitential discipline. The entire system of indulgences is built upon this conception of the church as a legal institution.

² Here the influence of Augustine is epoch-making. Cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*², Vol. III. p. 183 sq., Eng. tr. V. p. 203.

from age to age. It comes to include submission to the pope, pilgrimages, worship of saints, Mariolatry, indulgences. It expresses its ideals in the monastery and the hermitage. It claims authority, not spiritual merely, but temporal, through the pope, Christ's viceroy on earth. Yet, through all this ceaseless flow of change one permanent conception runs. Christianity is the absolute religion; unchanging, eternal, to be judged by no human standard, to be questioned by men at their peril, claiming and exercising through divine prerogative an unlimited authority over the hearts, the intellects, and the consciences of men.

At the root of both these conceptions lies a view of God as the Absolute which isolates Him from the world, as a purely transcendent being, and as such conceives Him as raised above the laws of human thought and experience, only to be known through the supernatural revelation which He has been pleased to impart to His church.¹ Where this is the case, it is impossible to relate Christianity rationally to other forms of human thought and life. Between it and all other sides of human experience there is a great gulf fixed.²

Fortunately not all who accepted the Catholic theory carried it to its logical consequences. Both in the Greek church and in the Latin we find men, who, while accepting the churchly principle, seek to conceive of Christianity in a manner at once more rational and more spiritual. Such are Athanasius, Basil, and the Gregories

¹ Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*,² III. p. 112, note, Eng. tr. V. p. 125 sq.; II. p. 116 sq. Eng. tr. III. p. 241.

² Hence the importance of the mystic type of piety in Catholicism.

among the Greeks, and Augustine among the Latins. All of these seek to relate Christianity to other forms of human experience, and defend its peculiar doctrines by showing their analogy with other and more familiar truths.¹ Especially significant is the service of Augustine, who by his emphasis upon the personal religious experience recalls many elements in the teaching of the great apostle, and proves a fountain of helpful and inspiring influence for the future.

6. *Anticipations of a more Historical View in the Middle Ages.*

The view of Christianity which has been described as characteristic of Latin Catholicism maintained itself substantially unchanged throughout the Middle Ages. We search the pages of the great schoolmen in vain for any evidence that they apprehended the historical questions which engage our present interest. Here and there in some obscure corner of a great *Summa*, we find a reminiscence of an earlier and better view. Thus in the midst of St. Thomas' discussion of the divine law, we suddenly come upon a modest section in which the question is proposed whether the new law (*i. e.* the Christian) is different from the old (*i. e.* that of Moses), and if so, in what respect.² But such passages are few and far between, and the hints which they contain are not followed out to any fruitful issue. It is true that we find in the same *Summa* a discussion of the question

¹ Cf. for example, Augustine's discussion of the Trinity.

² *Summa, Quæstio* 107.

whether there should be but one religion or many, and find to our surprise that our author expresses himself as of the latter opinion.¹ But the surprise vanishes when we realize that the religions of which he speaks are not historic faiths, but the various methods or disciplines which have been devised by men for the cultivation of the spiritual life. Within the one Catholic church many different methods of religious worship and culture may find a home, but outside of Catholicism there can be no religion.²

Yet there were not wanting influences even within the Middle Ages which tended to prepare the way for a more historical conception. First and foremost, though only indirect in its influence, was the growing spirit of rationalism which was the result of the revived interest in letters.³ Add to this the contact with other

¹ *Quæstio* 188: "De differentia religionum."

² No doubt in practice many of the mediæval theologians were better than their theory. The Christ whose familiar human features seemed lost under the elaborate structure of Catholic dogma found a refuge in the devotional literature of the church. In the pages of the great mystics of the Middle Ages the historic Jesus still lives, and contemplation of His willing sufferings becomes one of the chief means for the cultivation and discipline of the spiritual life. If one would grow in Christian experience, one must study the *Imitation of Christ*. But this practical recognition of the historic Jesus is not worked out to its theoretical consequences, even by the mystics themselves.

³ This shows itself not merely in such attempts to rationalize the great Christian dogmas as we meet with in connection with Anselm's treatment of the Being of God and of the Trinity, but also in the recognition of the possibility of a natural knowledge of God by reason apart from supernatural revelation. Here the adoption of the Aristotelian philosophy by the church proved momentous. The distinction between *articuli puri et mixti*, while designed to magnify the contrast between reason and revelation, was really a recognition of their points of contact, and, in however artificial and unhistorical a way, set Christianity against the background of

religions, notably with Mohammedanism, brought about by the crusades,¹ and you have the conditions out of which an appreciation of our question, "What is the distinctive feature of Christianity as a historic religion?" might easily grow. Three distinct types of thought make themselves manifest, each of which demands a passing reference. There is first the tendency to rationalize Christian truth, magnifying the points of contact between Christianity and other religions, and seeing in the former, after the fashion of the later deists, simply a republication or purification of the religion of nature. We may take Abelard as representative of this type.² There is, further, the effort to explain the superiority of Christianity by pointing to its historic place in the religious training of mankind. If we conceive of revelation, with Lessing, as a divine education of the race, the religion of Israel may be regarded as an elementary stage, destined in time to be super-

an earlier and wider revelation of God, and in so far forth, served to prepare the way for a more historical conception.

On this whole subject, cf. Reuter, *Geschichte der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, 2 vols., Berlin, 1875.

¹ Cf. Reuter, II. p. 24 sq., and especially p. 31 sq. In Averroëism, the church came into contact with a sceptical philosophy of the highest ability and attractiveness (cf. Reuter II. p. 49; Pünjer, *History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. tr. p. 39 sq.), and the records show that it was not without a profound influence both in Christian and Jewish circles (Reuter, II. p. 49; pp. 136-179). The friendly intercourse between Christians and Moslems reached its culmination in the brilliant circles which gathered at the court of the second Frederick (1212-50. Cf. Reuter, II. p. 253 sq.), and the sceptical spirit which it fostered found its boldest expression in the celebrated word, first uttered by Simon of Tournay (c. 1200), concerning the three impostors, Moses, Christ, and Mohammed.

² 1079-1142. Cf. Reuter, I. p. 185 sq.; Pünjer, *op. cit.* p. 36 sq.; Weber, *History of Philosophy*, p. 222 sq.

seded by the more perfect truth of Christianity. This view, suggested by the religious discussions which grew out of contact with Mohammedanism, is represented by William of Auvergne.¹ Finally, we have the revival of the older Origenistic view, according to which all historical religions are but passing phases, destined in time to be outgrown, and Christianity itself, though doubtless the highest thus far, is contrasted with the perfect and final Gospel still to be revealed. We may take Nicholas of Cusa² as representative of this view, which in the earlier Middle Ages finds fanciful expression in the Eternal Gospel of Joachim of Floris (died 1202).³

Abelard's views are set forth, partly in his *Introduction to Theology*, partly in his remarkable *Dialogue between a Philosopher, a Jew, and a Christian*.⁴ In reading his cool, unimpassioned sentences, with their exalted estimate of the Greek philosophy, and their denial of any essential novelty in Christianity, we seem to be breathing the air of the eighteenth century. So Leibnitz might have written, or Rousseau, or one of the English deists. As the Old Testament was the divine revelation to the Jews, so philosophy to the Greeks. If there is any historical dependence, it is on the side of the

¹ Bishop of Paris in the first half of the thirteenth century. Died 1249. Cf. Reuter, II. p. 107 sq.; Pünjer, p. 42.

² 1404-1464. Cf. Pünjer, pp. 66-89.

³ On Joachim cf. Reuter, II. p. 191 sq.; Pünjer, p. 44 sq.

⁴ *Introductio ad Theologiam* (Op. ed. Victor Cousin, Vol. II.); *Petri Abælardi Dialogus inter philosophum, Judæum at Christianum*. Cf. also his *Theologia Christiana*. In what follows we confess our indebtedness to the admirable discussion of Reuter (I. p. 185 sq.) where references and quotations may be found in full.

former.¹ Prophets and apostles took their teaching from the writings of the philosophers,² who were themselves inspired of God.³ Whatever is contained in the Christian Gospel the Greeks had anticipated; not merely the unity of God, but His Trinity.⁴ Even the incarnation they had anticipated, foreseeing it in prophetic vision, as truly as the seers of Israel.⁵ What, then, one might well ask, remained for Christianity? Simply this: to spread abroad through humanity at large the knowledge which had hitherto been the possession of the few; "to popularize what had thus far been scientific; in short, to translate the esoteric doctrines of the schools into language which should be simple and intelligible to common men."⁶ This was the happy work of the founder of Christianity and His disciples. In their teachings we find an authoritative

¹ Reuter, I. p. 186 and references, note 5, "Quem etiam per gentilem feminam id est Sibyllam multo apertius quam per omnes prophetas vaticinatum viderint."

² *Intro. ad Theol.* p. 62. "Quis enim nesciat et in Moyse et in prophetarum voluminibus quaedam assumpta de gentiliis libris."

³ *Intro.* p. 22. "Quam quidem divina inspiratio et per prophetas Judaeis et per philosophos gentilibus dignata est revelare." Cf. Weber, *History of Philosophy*, p. 224. "Shall we people hell with men whose lives and teachings are truly evangelical and apostolic in their perfection, and differ in nothing or in very little from the Christian religion?"

⁴ *Intro.* pp. 36-40. Often in the *Theologia Christiana*. Reuter, I. p. 188, note 14 and references; Weber, p. 225.

⁵ Reuter, p. 188 and references.

⁶ Reuter, p. 190. "Lediglich die Erweiterung des Wissenschaftlichen zum Populären, das Umgestalten des bis dahin verhältnissmässig Esoterischen in das allgemein Verständliche, die Entschränkung der Kenntniss der schon daseienden Wahrheit war die segensreiche That des Stifters des Christentums und seiner Apostel."

republication of the religion of nature¹ — this and nothing more.

Very different is the view of William of Auvergne.² So far from lowering Christianity to the level of the other religions, it is his chief effort to demonstrate its superiority over them. His aim is apologetic, and the occasion of his treatise, the doubts which the questionings of such men as Abelard and Roger Bacon³ had raised as to the truth and rightful authority of the Christian church. These doubts William seeks to resolve, not by an *a priori* construction of the true religion after the manner practised somewhat later by Raymond of Lully,⁴ but through historical comparison, by showing the place held by Christianity among the religions of mankind. According to his teaching, all history is a divine education of the race, in which one lesson follows

¹ This is also the teaching of the Dialogue. While the Christian claims superiority for his religion, this reduces in substance to two points: (1) The purification and reassertion of the natural moral law which had been obscured by the external precepts of Judaism. (2) The addition of the hope of immortality as a motive influencing men to its fulfilment. (Migne, 1664). Even the Jew sees in the Mosaic law simply a device to secure the more effective fulfilment of the requirements of the law of nature. (Migne, 1623). "Etsi concederemus nunc quoque more priorum sanctorum homines salvari posse sola naturalis lege, absque videlicet circumcissione aut caeteris legis scriptae carnalibus observantiis, non tamen haec superflua adjuncta esse concedendum est, sed plurimum utilitatis habere ad amplificandam vel tutius muniendam religionem, et ad malitiam amplius reprimendam."

² Cf. Reuter, II. p. 107 *sq.*, where may be found a full account of William's views.

³ 1214-1294. While somewhat later than William, he is mentioned here as the foremost representative of the tendency whose effects the former combats. On the teachings of Roger Bacon, cf. Reuter, II. p. 67 *sq.* where the similarity of his views to those of Abelard is clearly shown.

⁴ 1234-1315. Cf. Reuter, II. p. 94 *sq.*

another according to the capacity of the recipient.¹ The Old Testament is but an elementary book, useful for its time, but destined to be outgrown.² So the very difficulties which it contains — difficulties which apparently in William's time were keenly felt by thoughtful men, Jews as well as Christians — are, properly understood, evidences of its divine origin.³ Read it for what it is, a text-book of elementary morality made up of simple precepts to be received upon authority, and its significance as revelation can be defended. Claim for it more than this; seek in it the perfect and final religion, and no amount of allegorizing can save it.⁴

But what of Islam? Here is another religion, which claims authority, and which, on the face of it, is a more dangerous rival than Judaism. William recognizes its importance, is even willing to admit the relative truth

¹ Cf. Reuter, II. p. 107 *sq.*

² See his *Tractatus de fide et legibus*. Reuter, II. p. 332 (xxvi. note 1), where full quotations are given. "Comparatione timoris qui utique puerilis est, et elementarius seu alphabetarius, ut ita dicamus, sapientia, ipsa dilectio honorabilis est."

³ Reuter, II. p. 109. "Man irrt, wenn man meint dass dasjenige, was darin Aufgeklärt als anstössig, als Satzung der Willkühr erscheint, von jenem mit gleichen Empfindungen gehört oder gelesen worden wäre. . . Mag das immerhin ein nicht befriedigendes genannt werden, es war doch auf der religionsgeschichtlichen Stufe, welche das alte Volk Israel nach Gottes Willen niemals überschreiten sollte, ein beziehungsweise genügendes, ein weit richtigeres als das der neueren Juden, welche, weil sie in einer ganz anderen Lage sich befinden, den Werth und die Bestimmung der Gesetze verkennen müssen."

⁴ Reuter, II. p. 109. "Nichts wäre unhistorischer als denselben die Ausübung der allegorischen Interpretation zuzuschreiben. Dass diese berechtigt sei, davon ist weder in der Thora eine Spur zu finden, noch in den Propheten. Aber auch die Christen haben darauf zu verzichten: sie bedürfen einer so gewaltsamen Methode nicht um sich mit dem Alten Testamente auseinanderzusetzen."

for which it stands.¹ But on the whole it is not to be seriously considered. It is a retrogression from Christianity, and in due time is destined to be superseded and overthrown.²

With Judaism and Mohammedanism William contrasts Christianity as the perfect and final religion.³ Here alone we find realized the two conditions of a strictly universal religion; the permanence which comes from simple yet unchanging doctrines, the variety which allows the freest play to the changing capacity of the individual. In the Catholic church there is room for every virtue and for every gift, for the simple believer as well as for the most learned sage. Uniting thus in itself both progress and permanence, Christianity shows itself to be the final religion.⁴

¹ William recognizes that the conditions in the Byzantine Empire were such as to explain the rapid spread of monotheism, even under Mohammedan leadership. Reuter, II. p. 110 and references.

² Reuter, II. p. 110. "Aber so gewiss der Islam eine Bedeutung hat, so ist diese doch eine vorübergehende. Die spätere Zukunft wird eine andere Weltkarte zeigen als die Gegenwart, weissagt der Autor."

³ Reuter, II. p. 109 sq. and notes, p. 333. Christianity is the religion in which we see not only the fulfilment of all the Old Testament prophecies, but also the completion of ethics by the addition, to the original requirements of the natural law, of Christ's new commandment of love. "Evangelica igitur honestas utramque continet, naturalem scilicet, quae est veteris legis moralitas, et gratuitam, quae propria est evangelica superadditio et complementum."

⁴ Reuter, II. p. 111. "Die Einheit der Religion und die Mannichfältigkeit der Individualitäten müssen demnach mit einander ausgeglichen werden, was offenbar nur dann geschehen kann, wenn in der Universalreligion selbst ein Unwandelbares und ein Wandelbares zugleich dargeboten wird. Und das kann, meint Wilhelm von Auvergne, nur das katholische Christentum leisten. Die Glaubensartikel desselben sind, was Zahl und Formulierung betrifft, Jedem fassbar und doch so beschaffen, dass sie von Jedem auf eigenthümliche Weise geglaubt werden können."

With William's positive proof of Christianity we need not here concern ourselves. It is unsatisfactory enough. When he comes to the crux of his argument, the rational considerations upon which he has thus far leaned fail him, and he falls back upon supernatural revelation as the one sure support of faith. Those only who bow in submission before God's authority as revealed in the church can know of William's doctrine whether it be true.¹

Both Abelard and William of Auvergne, though separated by more than a century, belong to the golden age of scholasticism. Nicholas of Cusa,² whom we have chosen as our third representative, marks its close. Born at the dawn of the fifteenth century (1401) and living into its third quarter (1464), we feel in him the stirring of the new day. In his remarkable work, "*De Pace sive Concordantia Fidei* Dialogus," we have an anticipation of the Parliament of Religions which is all the more extraordinary as coming from one who was himself both a cardinal and a bishop. "Grieved by the horrors which had been practised from religious zeal at the taking of Constantinople, a devout man sees himself raised in the spirit to the heavenly council, where the departed souls, under the presidency of the Almighty, resolve upon a union of their religions in order that a permanent religious peace may prevail."³ This union

¹ Reuter, II. p. 112, and references.

² Cf. Pünjer, *op. cit.* p. 66 sq. Also F. A. Scharpff, *Der Cardinal und Bischof Nicolaus von Cusa als Reformator in Kirche, Reich, und Philosophie des 15ten Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen, 1871.

³ Pünjer, p. 81. It is interesting to notice that the discussion is opened by the Word, and that among those who take part are the apostles Peter

is grounded upon the agreement found among them in spite of all their differences, and, in order that it may be clearly manifested, an intelligent representative of every nation is raised to heaven in order to take part in the council. The aim of the discussion is determined to be "the reduction of the diversity of the religions to the one orthodox faith." Among those who take part in this remarkable congress are a Greek, an Italian, an Arabian, an Indian, a Chaldean, a Jew, a Scythian, a Gaul, a Persian, a Syrian, a Spaniard, a Turk, a German, a Tartar, an Armenian, a Bohemian, and an Englishman. The doctrines of Christianity are so explained as to appear conformable to the principles of universal reason, and the longed for agreement is brought about to the satisfaction of all.

It might seem as if in all this we had simply a repetition on a larger scale and with modern improvements of the principles advocated by Abelard in his earlier Dialogue. But Nicholas is not without appreciation of the diversities of the religions as well. In his work, "*De Cribratione Alchoran*,"¹ he distinguishes four stages in the development of religion, through which it approaches the highest truth. The first and lowest is the religion of nature, which rests "upon the knowledge of God which we can obtain by our natural powers." This is succeeded by the law and the prophets, the Old Testament religion, to which, as a third stage, follows

and Paul. The former explains the Christological doctrines; the latter expounds justification by faith, and defends the Roman doctrine of the sacraments.

¹ Cf. Pünjer, p. 84. The purpose of the book is "to establish the truth of Christianity, even out of the Koran."

the way of grace, which is Christianity. But even this is not the final stage of religion, for even the most perfect Christian looks for a time when "in complete union with God, we shall know Him without mediation, entirely as He is, wholly enjoy Him without limit, and find in this enjoyment a happiness which will still all our longings forever."¹ In thus contrasting historical Christianity, with its churchly mediation, with the eternal religion of immediate vision still to be revealed, Nicholas returns to a thought already anticipated by Origen, and destined to find new expression three centuries later in Lessing's "Education of the Human Race."

¹ Pünjer, *ibid.*

CHAPTER III

THE REFORMATION

1. *The Revival of the Question.*

THE second time that the question as to the nature of Christianity was forced upon the church as a whole was at the Reformation, in connection with the controversy with Rome. When the reformers broke with what was then historic Christianity, they were forced to give a reason for their conduct. The standards which had hitherto been accepted without question by every one were now subjected to a rigorous scrutiny. And for the first time in more than fifteen centuries, over a wide area, and with all the zest of a new discovery, men asked themselves the question what it meant to be a Christian.

Here again, as in the early days of Christianity, the break with the older forms was a gradual one. Nothing was further from the mind of Luther and his friends than to form a new church. As the apostles began as devout Jews, and thought of Christianity first as a reformed Judaism, so the reformers had no other purpose in view than to bring about a reformed Catholicism. Their controversy with the older faith was at first in matters of detail, and chiefly of a practical nature. Only gradually were they made aware, by the

slow logic of events, of a difference of principle so radical as to demand separate organization and expression. The discovery that Protestantism stood for a distinct type of the religious life came to them as a painful surprise. Yet, however slowly and unwillingly, to this conviction they were forced at last. And with the knowledge came the necessity for self-examination and self-defence. At the basis of all the Protestant apologetic in its controversy with Catholicism, as of the older Christian apologetic in its debate with Judaism, lies the question, *What is Christianity?*

Yet the new situation was not without its distinctive features. With the reformers, unlike the apostles, it was not the question of a religion wholly new. There was already a religion claiming the name of Christian; a religion hoary with age, rich in associations, weighty with traditions, powerful in organization. The task of the reformers, as they conceived it, was not to win the right of a new faith side by side with the old, but to wrest from the grasp of a mighty rival a name falsely usurped and grossly abused. When they asked the question, *What is Christianity?* they were not seeking the marks which separated Christianity as one historic religion from others, but a principle by which they might distinguish from a historic Christianity grown corrupt and false the true Christianity which alone was worthy of the name. The different form of the question is not without importance. We shall realize its significance as we study the answer given by Zwingli in his famous tract, "*On the Nature of True and False Religion.*"

2. *The Answer of the Reformers Illustrated in the Case of Zwingli's De Vera et Falsa Religione.*¹

Zwingli has sometimes been praised as the one reformer who has forestalled our modern question as to the nature of religion. The praise is misplaced. It is true that he puts the conception of religion in the forefront of his thinking. But he uses the term in a much narrower sense than is customary to-day.² Whereas our modern students of comparative religion think of a universal endowment or capacity of man, a religious instinct, of which the several historic religions are more or less perfect expressions, to Zwingli, as to Barnabas before him, there is but one true religion, which is Christianity; all others are false.³ The questions,

¹ On Zwingli's life cf. Stähelin, *Huldreich Zwingli: sein Leben und Wirken*, 2 vols. 1895, 1897; Jackson, *Huldreich Zwingli*, New York, 1901. On his theology, Baur, *Zwingli's Theologie, ihr Werden und ihr System*, Halle, 1885 (cf. especially II. pp. 785-803, for a summary of Zwingli's theological system); Sigwart, *Ulrich Zwingli*, Stuttgart, 1855, Pünjer, *History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion*, p. 145 sq.; Foster, F. H., "Zwingli's theology, philosophy, and ethics," in Jackson's life of Zwingli, p. 365 sq. In what follows the references are to the complete edition of Zwingli's works by Schuler and Schulthess, Turin, 1832.

² Cf. Baur, *Zwingli's Theologie*, I. p. 393. "Wenn nun Zwingli sagt, dass von hier aus, nämlich dass Gott dem verzweifelnden Menschen beibringt, um ihm zu helfen, die Religion oder Frömmigkeit ihren Ursprung genommen habe, so ist klar, dass er, wenn er von Religion überhaupt redet, nicht nach moderner religions-philosophischer Methode einen abstrakten Begriff des religiösen Verhältnisses aufstellen will, dass er vielmehr von der konkreten Thatsache der Gnadenoffenbarung Gottes gegen den Menschen ausgeht, um zu seinem Begriff von Religion zu gelangen."

³ Yet cf. Baur, I. p. 384, for Zwingli's estimate of God's revelation to the Gentiles. He allows them some seeds of truth, though few and

What is true religion? and What is Christianity? are one and the same. When we have found one we have found the other. If, then, we would know Zwingli's view of the nature of Christianity, we must seek our answer in his tract, "On the Nature of True and False Religion."¹

Zwingli defines religion as "that system² which includes the entire piety of Christians, to wit, their faith, life, laws, rites, sacraments."³ As true, it is derived from the fountain of God's word, and is to be distinguished from false religion which is superstition.⁴ Here we note the identification of Christianity with true religion to which reference has already been made.

dark. Those who have received them have spoiled them through their pride. Yet, even were this not the case, it would in no way invalidate our contention. It would simply prove that Christianity was, as a matter of fact, more wide-spread than some of its adherents have been accustomed to conceive. Cf. Pünjer, p. 151: "The divine revelation is primarily an immediate internal illumination by the Holy Spirit of God. This illumination comes to man in accordance with his nature. . . . On this natural illumination is founded the fact that Zwingli is able to recognize Christians and believers, even among the heathen, as participating in salvation." Also p. 153: "The revelation in the law is therefore in its essence quite the same as the universal internal revelation; and it is likewise the same as the highest revelation of God in the person of Christ."

¹ *De vera et falsa religione Commentarius* (1625). Opera, ed. Schuler and Schulthess, Turin, 1832, Vol. III. p. 145 sq.

² "Ratio." Baur translates "Beziehung," *op. cit.* I. p. 382.

³ P. 155. "Nos enim religionem hic accipimus pro ea ratione, quæ pietatem totam Christianorum, puta fidem, vitam, leges, ritus, sacramenta complectitur."

⁴ P. 155. "Dum autem additione veri et falsi religionem a superstitione distinguimus, in eum usum fit, ut cum religionem ex veris verbi Dei fontibus propinquaverimus, altero veluti poculo superstitionem quoque præbeamus."

Passing from the name to the reality, he further defines true religion as that which cleaves to the one true God alone.¹ True piety requires that a man should hang upon the lips of the Lord;² false religion on the other hand (*i. e.* Catholicism), is that which hears any one else but God. Those who put their trust in the creature are not truly pious. To be impious means to "receive the word of men as if it were the word of God."³

Such being the nature of true religion, it is evident that it is dateless.⁴ Wherever God speaks and man hears, there it is found. As a matter of fact, it began in the Garden of Eden, where God first revealed to Adam His will and showed him the "unspeakable sweetness of the heavenly Father."⁵ All that the

¹ P. 175. "Vera religio, vel pietas, haec est, quae uni solique Deo haeret."

² Pp. 175, 176. "Requirat ergo vera pietas, ut ab ore domini pendeat, nullius, praeter sponsi sui, verbum vel audiat vel recipiat."

³ P. 179. "Falsa religio sive pietas est, ubi alio fiditur quam Deo. . . . Impii sunt qui hominis verbum tanquam Dei amplectuntur."

⁴ Cf. Pünjer, p. 153. "The higher revelation is distinguished from the lower only by greater distinctness and certainty."

⁵ P. 174. "O miram inedicibilemque coelestis patris suavitatem. Rogat ubi sit, qui nisi omnia locaret ubi sunt, nusquam essent; sed propter infelicem hominem interrogat, quo ei culpam suam apertius obprobaret: is enim ignorabat ubinam esset. . . . Rogat ergo pater coelestis ubinam sit, ut perpetuo memor esset homo quo in loco, in quo rerum statu se mitis vocasset Deus. Hinc inquam religio vel potius pietas (hanc enim inter parentes et liberos, interque Deum et hominem statuunt) incunabula coepit. Videbat infelix homo nihil quam iram se commisisse: desperat igitur et a Deo fugit. Iam erga impium filium parentis pietatem vide! Accurrit, contumacemque inter temeraria consilia opprimit: quod quid est aliud quam pietas erga filium? Oritur ergo pietas a Deo adeo usque ad hodiernum diem, sed in nostrum usum."

Cf. the whole passage down to the bottom of p. 175. "Pietas ergo illic

subsequent ages have brought of divine grace and revelation was already enfolded in that primitive experience. True religion, which is Christianity, is as old as the creation.

The similarity to the position of Barnabas is evident. The distinction between Judaism and Christianity falls to the ground. All that is essential in religion was revealed to the Old Testament saints.¹ What, then, is the need and significance of Christ?

Zwingli is not without appreciation of the force of this question. He follows his section on religion with another on Christianity, in which he tries to answer the objection that his view of the nature of religion "annihilates" Christ, and reduces Christianity to a bare Jewish monotheism.² To this he answers that such an objection betrays shocking ignorance as to the nature of God, who, whether He be called Father, Son, or Spirit,

certo esse cognoscitur, ubi studium est juxta voluntatem Dei vivendi: nam istud absoluta quoque pietas inter parentes ac liberos requirit, ut filius æque studeat patri obsequi ac pater prodesse. Iterum, germana pietas istic solummodo nascitur, ubi homo non modo deesse sibi multa putat, sed adesse penitus nihil videt quo placere deo possit; contra vero creatori patrique suo sic omnia exuberare, ut nemo quicquam apud illum desiderare possit, liberalitatem vero ac erga hominum genus amorem tantum, ut nihil cuiquam negari possit. Quod sic testimoniis Scripturæ firmari potest, ut omnis doctrina tam vetus, quam nova, omnes pii, aliud nihil canant, quam nobis nihil adesse, Deo nihil deesse, ab illo nihil negari."

¹ P. 187. "Fuit Iudæorum synagoga longo tempore fecunda, priusquam Christus carne indueretur; postea vero quam tempus per Deum præstitutum iam impletum esset, coepit synagoga sterilesce, et iuvenula ex Gentibus ecclesia, fecunda fieri."

² P. 179. "Omnem enim doctrinam nostram ad hoc tendere, ut Christum exterminemus, et Iudæorum more, ut unum Deum credimus, sic unam solummodo personam omnes ad credendam inducamus."

is still but one God.¹ If Christ be God, He was present in the old dispensation as well as in the new, and His presence makes Old Testament as well as New, Christian.

But what is the significance of the *historic* Christ? Is he simply a teacher, reinforcing lessons which had been misunderstood or forgotten? Natural as this might seem, it is not Zwingli's view. Christ is much more than a teacher. He is "the assurance and pledge of God's grace";² the one through whom, as the second Adam,³ the atoning Saviour,⁴ our fallen nature is perfectly restored,⁵ and the ideal of filial dependence upon God, already clearly revealed in the Old Testament, but imperfectly attained because of sin, is at length fully realized.⁶ Here we find Zwingli, in common with the reformers generally, reviving the forgotten connection

¹ Pp. 179, 180. "Nos enim sic Deum agnoscendum amplectendumque docemus, ut sive patrem eum nomines, sive filium, sive spiritum sanctum, perpetuo tamen eum intelligas qui solus bonus, iustus, sanctus, benignus, reliquaque omnia est. . . . Quod igitur aemuli hic dicturi sunt, nos hactenus de pietate sic disseruisse, ut salutis per Christum gratiaeque nihil meminerimus, frustra cornicabuntur: primum quod omnia non simul neque eodem loco dici possunt; deinde, quod quicquid de animae Deique connubio diximus, sic de Christo quoque dictum est, quomodo de Deo (Christus enim Deus et homo est); postremo quod Dei cognitio natura sua Christi cognitionem antecedit."

² P. 180. "Est igitur Christus certitudo et pignus gratiae Dei."

³ P. 186, line 23. "Adam posterior."

⁴ P. 191, line 21. "Redemptionis precium."

⁵ Cf. p. 189 *sq.* for Zwingli's doctrine of the humanity of Christ.

⁶ P. 192. "Ridiculum enim fuisset, si is, cui omnia, quae unquam futura sunt praesentia perspiciuntur, tanto precio constituisset hominem liberare, quam mox ac liberatus esset, passurus fuisset pristinis in vitiis sordescere. Annunciat ergo cum primis vitam et mores immutandos esse: Christianum enim esse nihil est aliud quam novum hominem novamque creaturam esse."

between the saving power of Christianity and the person of its founder. With the writer to the Hebrews he sees in Christ the perfect realization of the religious ideal; with Paul, the one who has the power to realize it in others. Both together constitute Him the unique Saviour. It is singular that so high an estimate of the significance of the historic Christ should not have led Zwingli to a juster appreciation of the originality of the religion to which He gave His name. But in this failure, as we shall see, he does stand not alone.¹

If we compare Zwingli's answer with that of the Catholic church, the points of similarity are obvious. Christianity is the absolute religion, and as such eternal, unchanging. The distinction between Judaism and Christianity, so clearly recognized by Paul and the writer to the Hebrews, is minimized, if not altogether overlooked. In the estimate of Zwingli, there is no room within the compass of true religion for differences of kind. Religion is either true or false, and, so far as true, all religion is the same. Christ was with Adam in Eden as truly as with Paul on the Damascus road. The sense of novelty, of strangeness, of great new truths surpassing in richness all that had gone before; the idea so prominent in the thought of the great apostle, of mysteries revealed which had been hid from the foundation of the world, — all this has vanished. Christ

¹ On the different tendencies in Zwingli's theology, cf. Pünjer, p. 154. He contrasts the philosopher and the ecclesiastical theologian, of whom the former "sees in Christ only the historical embodiment and the personal representation of a universal process, while the latter strives to apprehend the person of Christ as of unique and peculiar significance in universal history."

does indeed a work without a parallel, but He is in no sense the founder of a new religion. In short the sense of Christianity as a historic religion is lacking. From this point of view we should have to class Zwingli — and in this he is typical of all the reformers — with Barnabas rather than with Paul. In his conception of Christianity as the absolute religion he is a true son of the Catholic church.

Yet this is only half the truth. The essence of the Catholic claim was the denial that Christianity could be judged by any human standard. Whatever the church taught as Christian, that must be accepted without question. Such a position, in view of the complexity and variety of ecclesiastical tradition, made any consistent definition impossible. Under the same name found shelter a wide confusion of fluctuating and inconsistent ideas and practices, whose only bond of union was the fact that they had all alike received the sanction, and were all alike embraced within the pale of the one Catholic and Apostolic church. In place of this indefiniteness, Zwingli puts a single principle, clear, definite, consistent. Christianity is the religion of filial dependence upon God, revealed in the Scriptures, realized through Christ. No one has a right to the name who does not partake of the experience. Whatever may be lacking in this conception, it at least betrays a clear apprehension of the problem. It establishes a rational test which may serve as a court of appeal when differences arise. It gives us a definition worthy of the name.

3. *The Conception of Christianity in Early Protestant Theology.*¹

The tendency to identify Christianity as such with all true religion, and to overlook differences of growth or of degree is characteristic of the Protestant reformers as a class. It appears both in the Lutheran and in the Reformed branch of the church. In spite of differences in detail growing out of the theological point of view, and the greater or less influence exerted upon the treatment by exegetical considerations, we find substantial agreement in the opinion that Christianity and the religion of the Old Testament are in essentials one and the same. We may illustrate this in the case of Luther, of Melancthon, and of Calvin.²

Luther is emphatic in his recognition of a Christianity before Christ.³ Köstlin declares that "it is very diffi-

¹ On the Protestant conception in general, cf. Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, p. 167 sq. Eng. tr. p. 268 sq.; *Dogmengeschichte*, III. p. 691 sq. Eng. tr. VII. p. 168 sq.; Kaftan, *Wesen des Christentums*, p. 359 sq.; *Dogmatik*, p. 70 sq.; Sabatier, *Philosophie de la Religion*, p. 243 sq.

Beside the works specially referred to below, the reader may compare Dorner, *Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie* (München, 1867); Gass, *Geschichte der protestantischen Dogmatik* (Berlin, 1854), 4 vols.; Heppe, *Dogmatik des deutschen Protestantismus im sechzehnten Jahrhundert* (Gotha, 1857), 3 vols.; *Dogmatik der evangelisch-reformirten Kirche* (Elberfeld, 1861); Schweizer, *Die Glaubenslehre der evangelisch-reformirten Kirche* (Zürich, 1844), 2 vols.; *Die protestantische Centraldogmen in ihrer Entwicklung innerhalb der reformirten Kirche* (Zürich, 1854), 2 vols.

² While no one of the three discusses the subject in any one place with the same fulness as Zwingli, their views may be learned with sufficient clearness in connection with their treatment of such questions as the relation between the two Testaments, the law and the Gospel, etc.

³ On Luther's theology, cf. Köstlin, *Luthers Theologie in ihrer*

cult to draw any sharp line of distinction (in his writings) between the condition of those who were saved under the new dispensation and that which was possible under the old.”¹ Forgiveness of sins through Christ was as efficacious before His death as after it. Justification by faith was an experience common in Old Testament times.² Not only do we find general proclamations of grace, but specific prophecies of salvation through the incarnation and atonement, “and that not in figures but in definite intelligible words.”³ Even

geschichtlichen Entwicklung und ihrem inneren Zusammenhange (2d ed. Stuttgart, 1883, 2 vols.; Eng. tr. by Hay, Philadelphia, 1897), especially the chapter on the relation between the Old and the New Testament revelation of salvation (Vol. II. p. 376 sq.; Eng. tr. II. p. 359 sq.). The following account is largely based upon Köstlin.

¹ II. p. 376, Eng. tr. II. p. 359. “Es ist in der That sehr schwer, den Unterschied zwischen dem neutestamentlichen und dem schon vorher möglichen Heilstande bei Luther scharf zu fixiren.”

² *Commentary on Galatians* [op. exeg. II. p. 11], Eng. tr. (London, 1830), p. 242. “So we also which are justified by faith, as were the patriarchs, prophets, and all the saints, are not of the works of the law, as concerning justification.” Cf. p. 210 [op. ex. I. p. 352]. “Hereof it followeth that the blessing and faith of Abraham is the same that ours is; that Abraham’s Christ is our Christ; that Christ died as well for the sins of Abraham as for us.”

³ Köstlin, II. p. 377, Eng. tr. II. p. 360. “Und auch innerhalb der Menschheit wird dort nicht bloss Gnade im Allgemeinen verkündigt, sondern bestimmt die Gnade in die Person des künftig menscherwerbenden, sich opfernden Sohnes, und so nicht etwa bloss in Figuren, sondern in ausdrücklichen, dem Verständniss zugänglichen Worten.” For specific references see Erlangen ed. XVI. 216; op. exeg. I. 241, 249; III. 67 sq.; XI. 112. The only difference was that the fathers looked forward to a Christ in the future, while we look back upon one already come. Cf. *Commentary on Galatians* [op. exeg. II. p. 35], Eng. tr. p. 256. “For this knowledge and benefit of Christ to come the saints of the Old Testament rejoiced more than we now do when He is so comfortably revealed and exhibited unto us.”

the Trinity was revealed to the patriarchs.¹ Moreover, as the New Testament had its sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, so the old dispensation its outward signs of grace in sacrifice and circumcision. The last, which corresponds to baptism, was an effective means of grace, even little children receiving the grace of faith through it.² Even in Paradise we find all the essentials of a true church, "regenerated by the Word, and preserved through faith in Christ."³

In answer to the question, What is new in the new covenant, Luther replies as follows. In the first place, there is the free proclamation of the Gospel to all mankind.⁴ What under the old dispensation was confined to Israel is now freely offered to the Gentiles as well. In the second place, there is a clearer revelation of truth. Not, indeed, in the sense of the addition of new articles, but of the clearer apprehension of those already made known. Thus the prophets and patriarchs understood the Trinity, but the common people did not grasp it. And there were truths, such as the supernatural conception, which even the prophets themselves did not fully understand. Still further, in the Gospel we find not merely a general but a specific offer of grace to each individual. Thus the possibility of individual assurance is greatly increased, and new treasures of

¹ Köstlin, II. p. 378, Eng. tr. II. p. 361, and references (op. ex. I. 285; V. 51; XI. 112).

² Köstlin, II. p. 378, Eng. tr. II. p. 361, and references (op. ex. I. 315; II. 78 sq.; IV. 75-84). Such a sacramental sign was the rainbow.

³ Quoted by Köstlin, II. p. 378, Eng. tr. II. p. 362, "*haec fuit prima ecclesia per verbum regenerata et fide in Christum servata.*"

⁴ Köstlin, II. p. 379, Eng. tr. II. p. 362.

comfort and peace opened to the Christian believer.¹ Finally, in the New Testament the blessings are purely spiritual. The temporal blessings which God for a time vouchsafed to the Old Testament saints are no longer needed for us. We live in a kingdom of freedom, and are released from all external precept and constraint.² To sum up, in the new covenant we have the full realization of the ideal already revealed in the old.

A like view meets us in Melanchthon.³ In his "Loci Communes" he declares that it is a great mistake to distinguish law and Gospel as though the first was confined to the Old Testament, while the second was peculiar to the New. The truth is that as the law is repeated in the New Testament, so the Gospel is anticipated in the Old. There is only one method of salvation, namely, the evangelical way of justification by faith, in which the fathers of the Old Testament shared as well as the saints of the New.⁴ The promise began with

¹ Köstlin, II. p. 379, Eng. tr. II. p. 362, and references (op. ex. XI. 141; Erlangen ed. VI. 225 sq.; op. ex. I. 245 sq.; Erlangen ed. XLVI. 269; op. ex. III. 217 sq.; XI. 135 sq. 293). Cf. also Vol. I. p. 227.

² Köstlin, II. p. 380, Eng. tr. II. p. 363, and references (op. ex. XI. 141; III. 56; Erlangen ed. XVIII. 233 sq.; XII. 49).

³ See the *Loci Communes*, ed. Kolde, 2d ed. Erlangen, 1890, especially p. 145 sq. "De Evangelio." On Melanchthon's theology, cf. Herrlinger, *Theologie Melanchthons* (Gotha, 1879), especially p. 444 sq. where he speaks of Melanchthon's views of church history. We note that to Melanchthon, as to Augustine and to Luther, the church was founded in Paradise (p. 447 and references).

⁴ P. 146. "Neque vero ita legem et evangelium tradidit Scriptura, ut evangelium id modo putes, quod scripserunt Matthaeus, Marcus, Lucas et Johannes, Mosi libros nihil nisi legem; sed sparsa est evangelii ratio, sparsae sunt promissiones in omnes libros veteris ac novi Testamenti. Rursum leges etiam sparsae sunt in omnia tum veteris tum novi Testamenti volumina. Nec, ut vulgo putunt, discriminata sunt legis et

Adam at the very dawn of history, and grew more and more clear as time went on.¹ Where, asks Melancthon, will you find a clearer statement of the Gospel than in Deut. v. 10?²

Yet, in spite of their similarity, there is a twofold difference between the Testaments. In the first place, the promises of the old covenant have to do chiefly with external blessings, whereas the new includes "all good things."³ In the second place, the Old Testament promises are conditioned upon fulfilment of the law, while under the New, Christians are free from its exactions.⁴ Yet the latter difference is only in appearance, for Melancthon makes haste to add that so far as men were really justified under the old covenant it was in the same way as later believers under the new.⁵ Thus

evangelii tempora, quanquam alias lex, alias evangelium subinde aliter revelata sunt. Omne tempus, quod ad mentes nostras attinet, est legis atque evangelii tempus. Sicut omnibus temporibus eodem modo homines justificati sunt, peccatum per legem ostensum est, gratia per promissionem seu evangelium."

¹ P. 147. "Ea prima promissio est, primum evangelium, quo sublevatus Adam concepit certam suae salutis spem adeoque et justificatus est." See also above, "qui obscure primum, postea subinde clarius revelatus est."

² P. 149. "Quid enim magis evangelicum reperias, quam promissio illa est, quam spiritus Dei . . . subjecit: Faciens misericordiam, etc."

³ P. 211 sq. Ego vetus Testamentum voco promissionem rerum corporalium. . . . Contra novum Testamentum non aliud est, nisi bonorum omnium promissio.

⁴ *Ibid.* "Conjunctam cum exactione legis . . . promissio citra legem, nullo justitiarum nostrarum respectu."

⁵ P. 216. "Ad eum modum fuerunt libri etiam patres ante Christi incarnationem, quotquot spiritum Christi habuere." Cf. *Apol.* p. 128, "Patres . . . gratuitam misericordiam et remissionem peccatorum fide accipiebant, sicuti sancti in novo testamento." (Quoted by Heppe, *Dogmatik des deutschen Protestantismus*, II. p. 251).

the great significance of the historic Christ is not so much that He brings new blessings as that in Him we have the pledge of the fulfilment of all the promises already made by God to the men of old.¹

In later Lutheran dogmatics,² the identity of the Old and the New Testaments is emphasized to an even greater degree. Thus John Gerhard in his "Loci"³ declares that "from the time when through the Son of God the Gospel promise was first made known in Paradise, the voice of the Gospel has been ever sounding in the church through patriarchs and prophets."⁴ "Whatsoever prophecies we find in the Old Testament concerning the person, office, passion, and resurrection of Christ are nothing else than repetitions and declarations of that first discourse revealed by the Son of God in Paradise."⁵ Nor has anything been added by the

¹ P. 147. "Porro illarum promissionum omnium pignus est Christus, quare in eum referendae sunt omnes scripturae promissiones."

² On Lutheran dogmatics, cf. Heppe, *Dogmatik des deutschen Protestantismus im sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, especially Locus xiv., "De Verbo Dei seu de Lege et Evangelio" (II. p. 225 sq.). Schmid H., *Die Dogmatik der ev. luth. Kirche*, 7th ed. Gütersloh, especially p. 5 sq. ("De religione"), p. 373 ("Lex et evangelium"); Hase, *Hutterus redivivus*; Luthardt, *Kompendium der Dogmatik*.

³ *Loci Theologici* (in 9 vols. finished 1622). The quotations which follow are from the Berlin edition of 1865. On Gerhard, see Kunze in *Herzog, Real Encyclopädie*,³ V. p. 91 sq., also Troeltsch, *Vernunft und Offenbarung bei Johann Gerhard und Melancthon*, Göttingen, 1891.

⁴ § 35 (III. p. 158). "Ex eo tempore quo per Filium Dei prima promissio evangelica in paradiso manifesta est, semper sonuit vox evangelii in ecclesia per patriarchas ac prophetas repetita ac declarata, proinde unum et idem est evangelium, quod non in N demum T natum vel editum, sed jam inde a primis lapsi generis humani temporibus promulgatum, pro gratia Dei, remissio peccatorum et salus una atque eadem omnibus sanctis annuntiata ac oblata fuit." See also § 34.

⁵ *Ibid.* "Quaecunque enim in Scriptis V. T. de persona, officio,

New Testament. Against Bellarmine, Gerhard expressly denies that Christ has added anything to the older revelation either along the lines of law or Gospel. The apparent difference between the promises of the two Testaments is explained by the figurative language of the former and the ambiguity of the terms used,¹ and to the question whether as mediator (*i. e.* in his incarnate life) Christ has added any new precept to the natural law inscribed upon the mind of man, is answered roundly in the negative.²

An excellent statement of the Reformed position³ is to be found in Calvin's "Institutes."⁴ While in general agreeing with the view already described, the French reformer shows a much clearer sense of the originality of Christianity as a historical religion than either

passione, resurrectione aliisque operibus ac beneficiis Messiae vaticinia extant nihil aliud sunt, quam primae illius evangelicae concionis per Filium Dei in Paradiso revelatae illustriores repetitiones et declarationes."

Cf. Brenz in *Cat. illus.* pp. 17, 18: "Haec religio non est recens inventa aut de hominibus excogitata et instituta; sed est statim ab initio huius mundi in Paradiso a Deo ipso praedicata et commendata" (quoted in Heppe, II. p. 253). Among the arguments for the truth of the Christian religion Calov (I. p. 152, quoted by Schmid, p. 6) includes the fact that it is not new (*non nova est*).

¹ § 60, p. 169.

² § 66, p. 173. "Respondemus I. Christus est unus cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto Deus, qui legem moralem hominum mentibus inculpsit eamque solenniter in Monte Sinai repetivit, quo sensu legislatorem dici posse non negamus; queritur autem hoc loco, an Christus ut mediator ideo in mundum venerit, ut novas leges promulgaret? quod negamus."

³ On the view of Christianity in the Reformed Dogmatics, see Heppe, *Dogmatik der evang. reformirten Kirche*, Locus xvi. "De foedere gratiae"; Schweizer, *Die Glaubenslehre der evang. reformirten Kirche*, § 71 (II. p. 106 sq.).

⁴ The quotations which follow are taken from the translation of the Calvin translation society (Edinburgh, 1845).

Luther or Melanchthon. This is shown at the very outset by his definition of the Gospel. "By the Gospel," he says, "I understand the clear manifestation of the mystery of Christ."¹ "I confess, indeed," he goes on to add, "that inasmuch as the term Gospel is applied by Paul to the doctrine of faith, it includes all the promises by which God reconciles men to himself and which occur throughout the law. For Paul there opposes faith to those terrors which vex and torment the conscience when salvation is sought by means of works. Hence it follows, that *Gospel*, taken in a large sense, comprehends the evidences of mercy and paternal favor which God bestowed upon the patriarchs. Still, by way of excellence, it is applied to the promulgation of the grace manifested in Christ." The Gospel, then, has the distinction of being "a new and extraordinary kind of embassy, by which God fulfilled what He had promised, these promises being realized in the person of His Son. For though believers have at all times experienced the truth of Paul's declaration, that 'all the promises of God in Him are yea and Amen,' inasmuch as these promises were sealed upon their hearts; yet because He hath in His flesh completed all the parts of our salvation, this vivid manifestation of realities was justly entitled to this new and special distinction."²

Thus Calvin distinguishes the Gospel not merely from the law but from earlier gracious revelations of God within the Old Testament. Yet he hastens to qualify this distinction on the right hand and the left. In the first place we must be on our guard against

¹ Bk. II. ix. 2 (I. p. 494).

² *Ibid.* (p. 495).

Servetus' error that in Christ "all the promises have been fulfilled." Though Christ has "not left any part of our salvation incomplete," it does not follow that "we are now put in possession of all the blessings purchased by Him."¹ On the other hand, we must not imagine that the Gospel has succeeded the law "in such a sense as to introduce a different method of salvation. It rather confirms the law and proves that everything which it promised is fulfilled. What was shadow, it has made substance. When Christ says that the law and the prophets were until John, he does not consign the fathers to the curse, which, as the slaves of the law, they could not escape. He intimates that they were only imbued with the rudiments, and remained far below the height of the Gospel doctrine. . . . Hence we infer, that when the whole law is spoken of, the Gospel differs from it only in respect of clearness of manifestation."²

This general discussion of the Gospel is followed by two chapters which treat in considerable detail of the resemblances between the Old Testament and the New, and their differences. Against Servetus and the Anabaptists, who "think of the people of Israel just as they would do of some herd of swine, absurdly imagining that the Lord gorged them with temporal blessings here, and gave them no hope of a blessed immortality," it is to be maintained "that all whom, from the beginning of the world, God adopted as His peculiar people, were taken into covenant with Him on the same

¹ *Op. cit.* Bk. II. ix. 3 (I. p. 495).

² Bk. II. ix. 4 (I. p. 497).

conditions and under the same bond of doctrine as ourselves.”¹

We have to do, then, with two covenants, the same in “reality and substance,” but differing in administration.² They agree first, in the common hope of immortality;³ secondly, in being established by the mercy of God;⁴ thirdly, in that “they both had and knew Christ the Mediator, by whom they were united to God and made capable of receiving His promises.”⁵ They differ first, in that, in the old covenant, the heavenly inheritance is exhibited under the form of temporal blessings, which is not the case in the new;⁶ secondly, in that the Old Testament typified Christ under ceremonies which exhibited “only the image of truth,” the shadow, not the substance; whereas the New Testament gives us

¹ *Op. cit.* Bk. II. x. 1 (I. p. 501).

² *Ibid.* Bk. II. x. 2; xi. 1 (I. pp. 502, 526).

³ *Ibid.* Bk. II. x. 2 (I. p. 502). “That temporal opulence and felicity was not the goal to which the Jews were invited to aspire, but that they were admitted to the hope of immortality, and that assurance of this adoption was given by immediate communications, by the law and by the prophets.” Calvin goes at length into the proof of this point, devoting to it pp. 502-522.

⁴ P. 502. “That the covenant by which they were reconciled to the Lord was founded on no merits of their own, but solely by the mercy of God, who called them.”

⁵ P. 502. This point, as well as the preceding, seems to Calvin so much clearer and less controverted than the first that he dismisses it very briefly. Cf. p. 522 *sq.*

⁶ Bk. II. xi. 1 (I. p. 526). “The first difference then is, that though, in old time, the Lord was pleased to direct the thoughts of His people, and raise their minds to the heavenly inheritance, yet, that the hope of it might be the better maintained, He held it forth, and, in a manner, gave a foretaste of it under earthly blessings, whereas the gift of future life, now more clearly and lucidly revealed by the Gospel, leads our minds directly to meditate upon it, the inferior mode of exercise formerly employed in regard to the Jews being now laid aside.”

"both the full truth and the entire body";¹ thirdly, in that the Old Testament is literal, the New spiritual;² fourthly, in that the Old Testament is one of bondage, the New of liberty,³ and finally, in that the Old is for one people only, while the New is for all.⁴

As to the objection that the immutability of God precludes such differences, he answers that God "adapts different forms to different ages, as He knows to be expedient to each."⁵ Asked why God did not give all He had to give at first, he replies that this is a matter which concerns God's sovereignty, into which it is presumptuous for us to inquire.⁶

Comparing the Lutheran and the Reformed positions, we find that, while in the main they agree, the

¹ *Op. cit.* Bk. II. xi. 4 (I. p. 529).

² Bk. II. xi. 7 (I. p. 533).

³ Bk. II. xi. 9 (I. p. 535).

⁴ Bk. II. xi. 11 (I. p. 537).

⁵ Bk. II. xi. 13 (I. p. 540). "If the husbandman prescribes one set of duties to his household in winter, and another in summer, we do not therefore charge him with fickleness, or think he deviates from the rules of good husbandry, which depends on the regular course of nature. . . . Why, then, do we charge God with inconstancy when He makes fit and congruous arrangements for diversities of times? . . . Paul likens the Jews to children, and the Christians to grown men (Gal. iv. 1). What irregularity is there in the divine arrangement which confined them to the rudiments which were suitable to their age, and trains us by a firmer and more manly discipline. The constancy of God is conspicuous in this, that He delivered the same doctrine to all ages, and persists in requiring that worship of His name which He commanded at the beginning. His changing the external form and manner does not show that He is liable to change. In so far He has only accommodated Himself to the mutable and diversified capacities of men."

⁶ Bk. II. xi. 14 (I. p. 541 *sq.*): "Who, I ask, can deny the right of God to have the free and uncontrolled disposal of His gifts, to select the nations which He may be pleased to illuminate, the places which He may be pleased to illustrate by the preaching of His word, and the mode and measure of progress and success which He may be pleased to give to His doctrine?"

latter has a much clearer recognition of the distinctive features of Christianity as a historical religion. In Calvin's case, this was no doubt due to his conscientious exegesis, which more than once led him to take positions which played havoc with the consistency of his system. But quite apart from this, it is in keeping with the Reformed principles, which distinguish sharply between God and man, and hence gain room for a freer recognition of the human element in religion than is possible in Lutheranism. As it is characteristic of the Reformed doctrine that it makes more earnest with the humanity of Christ than is often the case with the Lutheran theology,¹ so, in like manner, in their treatment of the history of redemption, Reformed theologians have shown a keener appreciation for the varieties which have characterized God's dealing with men, than has been the case with their brethren of a sister church.² A familiar illustration of this is to be found in the federal theology of Coccejus, in which we have an honest, even if not over-successful, attempt to conceive the Biblical history as a series of ascending stages of divine revelation.³

¹ Compare the chapter in the *Westminster Confession* (viii.), "Of Christ the Mediator," with the treatment of the same subject in the formula of Concord (viii.). An excellent illustration of the scholasticism in which the later Lutheran theology abounds is afforded by the tract of Martin Chemnitz on the incarnation (*De incarnatione Filii Dei*, Berlin, 1865).

² For the proof in detail, the reader is referred to the works of Schweizer and Heppe, already referred to.

³ See his *Summa Doctrinae de Foedere et Testamento Dei* (Opera, Vol. VII.). He distinguishes two covenants, one of works, and one of grace, and then traces the various steps through which the former has been abrogated: 1, by the sin of man; 2, by the covenant of grace; 3, by the promulgation of the New Testament; 4, by the death of Christ; and

Yet when all is said, it remains true that the Calvinist, as little as the Lutheran, attained to what is worthy to be called a truly historical conception of Christianity. In the one case as in the other, the point of departure is speculative and *a priori*. The idea of the true religion is constructed from Scripture, reason, and present experience, and then is carried back in principle to the beginning of time.¹

finally, 5, by His resurrection. In his larger *Summa Theologiae*, he traces the unfolding of the covenant of grace through three great historic stages — i. e., the patriarchal period before the law (*ante legem*); the legal period, or the Old Testament proper (*sub lege*); and the period of the Gospel, the New Testament (*post legem* or *sub evangelio*). Each of these had its peculiar sacraments, through which the grace of God was exhibited. Cf. Schweizer, I. p. 103 sq.

In its later form the covenant theology lost its original historical significance, and became involved in scholastic distinctions. Cf. the discussion of the subject in Turretine's *Institutio* (New York, 1847) II. p. 151 sq. "De Foedere gratiae et duplici ejus oeconomia in Veteri et Novo Testamento." Turretine's chief concern is to maintain the substantial unity of the covenant of grace under both dispensations, against the various heretics (i. e. Socinians, Remonstrants, Anabaptists), who sought unduly to magnify the differences. Cf. especially Quaestio 5.

¹ Schweizer (*op. cit.* II. p. 114) considers this ideal construction of religion, as distinct from a merely empirical treatment, one of the great merits of the Reformed theology. It is impossible, he tells us, to exhibit the universal character of Christianity more convincingly than when it is conceived as entering the world immediately after the first sin. He criticizes Schleiermacher for distinguishing so sharply as he does between Christianity and Judaism (cf. I. p. 95. "Dieses Ausgehen vom empirisch Geschichtlichen ist das Unreformirte bei Schleiermacher").

No doubt there is a measure of truth in this view. We may admit that it is difficult to conceive of an absolute religion which is not present, in germ, at least, from the beginning. But unfortunately the conception, which for us resolves the difficulty, had not yet dawned on the horizon of the reformers' thought. Not till man had grasped the idea of progress through development was it possible to conceive of a religion which should be at once historically new, and at the same time as old as the creation.

An instructive illustration of the unhistorical view of the later Protestantism is to be found in the Westminster doctrine of the covenants.¹ The Confession follows Paul in distinguishing two great stages or types of religion, the legal and the gracious, both divinely given, but in purpose and effect sharply contrasted. But instead of making the contrast, as does Paul, between Adam as the representative of the former class and Christ as the representative of the latter, the line is drawn between Adam as under the covenant of law, and Adam as under the covenant of grace. The entire drama of redemption plays itself out within the lifetime of the father of humanity. Eden anticipates Nazareth and Calvary. Thus it comes to pass that instead of seeing in the religion of Israel, with Paul, a legal institution whose purpose is mainly negative, or even a partial provision needing later supplement, as does the writer to the Hebrews, the Westminster divines see in it a gracious economy differing only in unessentials from the Gospel of Christ. It is the same covenant which runs through Old and New Testaments alike, however differently administered.² What the new dispensation

¹ An adequate account of the origin and history of the covenant theology is still a desideratum in theological literature. It is a characteristic feature of the early English Puritanism, appearing in the writings of Cartwright, Ball, and Ames in England, as well as of Rollock and Howie in Scotland. (Cf. Mitchell, *Baird Lectures on the Westminster Confession*, 2d ed. p. 387). Through Ussher (see his *Summe and Substance of the Christian Religion*), it was embodied in the Irish articles of 1815 (§ 21); from Ames (see his *Medulla Theologiae*) it probably passed to Coccejus (1603-1669) who is often wrongly spoken of as its founder. On Coccejus, see note 3, p. 105.

² Cf. *West. Conf.* vii. 6, "There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations."

gives in its simplicity, that the old furnished through its types and ceremonies. It is clear that from this point of view the significance of Christianity as a historic religion is overlooked, and the originality of its founder, if not denied, is at least seriously minimized.¹

¹ It may be interesting to note in passing the views of the heretics whom the Reformers opposed :

Calvin charges Servetus with regarding the Old Testament promises as having to do with temporal blessings only, and denying that the Old Testament saints had the hope of immortality (*Institutes* Bk. II. x. 1, Vol. I. p. 501). Similar views seem to have been held in Anabaptist circles (*ibid.*; cf. also Turretine, *op. cit.* "De Foedere Gratiae," Quæstio 5).

The Socinians made a sharp distinction between the two Testaments. Their view of religion was legalistic, and they regarded Christ as a legislator who had added to the precepts of the law of Moses certain new commandments of His own. Cf. *Racovian Catechism*, Section V. chap. i. "Of the precepts of Christ which He added to the law" (Eng. tr. London, 1818, p. 173 sq.). Thus to the general command of love which was included in the Old Testament, Christ has added the specific command that we "should love Himself also, and thus love God in Him" (p. 181). In like manner, to the general command to worship God, we have the addition of the specific command to worship Christ (p. 189). Unlike the orthodox, who carried the recognition of Christ back into the Old Testament, the Socinians made this the distinctive feature of the New.

Arminius also was charged with holding that "it is a matter of doubt, whether believers under the Old Testament understood that the legal ceremonies were types of Christ and of His benefits" (Works, tr. by James Nichols, London, 1828, Vol. II. p. 6. Cf. Turretine, *op. cit.*) But he himself does not remember that he ever said such a thing. He admits saying that "an inquiry not altogether unprofitable might be instituted how far the ancient Jews understood the legal ceremonies to be types of Christ." Indeed, he wishes his brethren would take upon themselves to prove this to him. "Let them make the experiment, and they will perceive how difficult an enterprise they have undertaken." Arminius himself has an exalted opinion of the originality of Jesus. "He was a Teacher far transcending all other teachers, — Moses, the prophets, and even the angels themselves, both in the mode of His perception, and in the excellence of His doctrine." From Him the Christian religion gains its name, and this in two ways, both as being its cause, and

More than one cause doubtless contributed to produce this misconception. Generations were still to pass before the birth of the historical spirit. However great the breach between Catholicism and Protestantism even the greatest of the reformers could not wholly separate themselves from the influence of the mother church. The conception of God as the Absolute, far removed above all human reach or understanding, changeless, eternal, infinite, incomprehensible, — this view, inherited by the older church from the Greek philosophy, still exerted its sway over the greatest intellect of Protestantism.¹ In the white light of the infinite there is no room for the apprehension of differences of degree. False or true, natural or supernatural, finite or infinite, human or divine, profane or Christian: these are the sole alternatives to Protestant as to Catholic. Even the Biblical principle, at first, through its picture of the man Christ Jesus, a means of deliverance from this dead monotony, tended in time to reinforce it. For the Bible is nothing if not a book of growth, the record of a long historic training, in which men have been led through successive stages into a clearer and ever clearer apprehension of God. But

as being its object. 1, "Because, as the Teacher sent from God, He prescribed this religion, both by His own voice when He dwelt on earth, and by His apostles, whom He sent forth into all the world." 2, "Because the same Jesus Christ, the object of this religion according to godliness, is now exhibited, and fully or perfectly manifested; whereas He was formerly promised and foretold by Moses and the prophets only as being about to come" (p. 333. Cf. also p. 203, "Of the comparison of the law and the Gospel"). Here we have a view at once more Biblical and more historical than that which meets us in the writings of his opponents.

¹ Cf. note 1, p. 16.

once made the subject of a dogma of inspiration, which puts all parts of a book so infinitely various upon the same pedestal of infallibility, and it loses its significance as a standard. The distinctions which it contains are overlooked or explained away. The words of Moses and of Isaiah are exalted to the same level as those of Christ. Thus, as truly if less crudely than in the case of Barnabas, the Old Testament is made a Christian book, which means not merely that Christ is carried back into the Old Testament, and used to interpret it, but that the Old Testament is carried forward into Christ, and made to interpret Him. A new legalism takes the place of the old, and the new insight of a Luther and a Zwingli threatens to be lost.

It is melancholy to note the rapidity with which the early simplicity of Protestantism was exchanged for a form of religion ever more artificial and complicated. Under the shelter of the Biblical principle there grew up a new dogma as rigorous and exacting as the old. Side by side with the profession of the universal priesthood of believers, there arose a new sacerdotalism no less narrow and intolerant than that which had led to the earlier revolt. Whatever seemed essential to the necessities of the growing church, that — by a logic as inexorable in Protestantism as in Catholicism before it — came to be reckoned as part of essential Christianity. The more elaborate and complicated the systems, the more insistent were their authors that they should be reckoned as absolute truth. Thus in Protestantism, as in Catholicism before it, the loftiness of the claim defeated itself.

And yet it is easy to exaggerate the parallel. Even in its most distorted forms Protestantism included within itself principles of self-reformation lacking in the older system. By its appeal to the individual reason and conscience it invited each man to ask for himself the question as to the nature of Christianity. By its emphasis upon the individual Christian experience it laid stress upon the simpler and more familiar elements in religion. The qualities on which it insisted as characteristics of true Christianity were as a matter of fact distinctive notes of the religion of Christ.¹ Above all, by its acceptance of the Biblical principle, it provided a standard through which, however much it might be neutralized by a false exegesis, it was yet possible for the sincere searcher to recover those essential truths which time and tradition had obscured. Thus when the new era dawns, it is on Protestant soil and among Protestant thinkers that we must look for the first attempts to gain a more adequate, a more historical, in a word, a more scientific conception of Christianity.

¹ What has been said in criticism of the unhistorical character of early Protestant theology as to its form, is quite consistent with the recognition of the fact that, in its substance, it is the reaffirmation of elements which are distinctive of the religion of Christ. In its emphasis upon filial trust and confidence in God; in its simplicity and spirituality; in its ethical strictness; in its sense of the worth of the individual for God; in its doctrine of the equality of believers in privileges and duties, it is, in truth, a revival of primitive Christianity. It is at fault, not in its ideal, but in the unhistorical spirit which carries back this ideal into pre-Christian conditions, and so fails to recognize the full significance and originality of the historic Christ.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN THEOLOGY

AMONG the causes which in modern times have led to the restatement of our question in a new form, two are of special importance. These are first, the rise of the critical philosophy, and secondly, the awakening of the historical spirit. We shall say a few words of each.

1. *The Rise of the Critical Philosophy.*¹

One of the most noticeable features of the entire period which we have passed in review is the purely objective character of its thought. To Christian philosophy, from Augustine to Calvin, things, whether physical or spiritual, are independent existences, outside of the individual, and unaffected by his thought. The part played by subjective processes in the construction of knowledge is overlooked. Here and there

¹ As the purpose of this section is simply introductory, any extended bibliography would be out of place. Reference may, however, be made to Edward Caird's *Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant*, Glasgow, 1877, the introduction to which contains an excellent historical review of the antecedents of the Kantian philosophy. This is largely omitted from his later and fuller work, *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, Glasgow, 1889, 2 vols. The reader may also be referred to J. Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (Boston, 1893), especially chaps. iii. and iv.

we find a thinker who is puzzled by the problem as to the origin of knowledge. But in general what we call *Erkenntnisstheorie* is unknown.¹

The purely objective character ascribed to reality is not confined to individual things. General conceptions such as humanity, beauty, goodness, truth, are hypos-tatized, and, divorced from the concrete objects through which alone they reveal themselves to the apprehension of man, are conceived as having their own independent

¹ An exception may be made in the case of the later Greek philosophy (Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics). Cf. Caird, *op. cit.* p. 12: "The problem of the criterion of truth, which was the subject of so much controversy to the Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics, is simply the problem of knowledge in the form which it necessarily takes in all individualistic speculation." But the dualism which all assume between knowing and being renders a satisfactory solution impossible. It is true that Christianity, by its emphasis upon religious experience, seeks to overcome this dualism; but the philosophical language in which its teachings are clothed (cf. for example, the idea of the Logos) does not lend itself readily to the expression of other than dualistic ideas. Hence we find that "the history of dogma is a continual war of logic against the spirit of Christianity" (Caird, p. 21). Augustine gives us a classical illustration of this conflict. In many respects, he is a man of almost modern spirit, keenly alive to the importance of the individual religious experience and apt to describe it. There is a very real sense in which he may be called the father of modern psychology (on Augustine's services to *Erkenntnisstheorie*, cf. Ladd, *Philosophy of Knowledge*, pp. 46-50). Yet, at the same time, as churchman, he asserts that the Christian dogmas are completely independent of the individual reason and conscience. In the theology of the Middle Ages, this dualism becomes more pronounced. It is the effort of the schoolmen to establish the objects of faith upon a basis entirely independent of the individual reason. Nor is the emphasis upon the personal religious experience at the Reformation sufficient to modify this general point of view. (Cf. Caird, p. 32, on the significance of Luther.) In this connection, attention may be called to Calvin's doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, as assent to a body of truth entirely independent of the individual. (*Institutes*, Vol. I. chap. vii. pp. 89-96, ed. Cal. Tr. Soc. Cf. *Westminster Confession*, i. 4, 5.)

existence in the ideal world.¹ Back of the phenomenal universe known to sense, there is a transcendent world which is no less real, peopled with the abstractions of thought, which are yet conceived to live a life similar to that made familiar by the objects of our more ordinary experience. In spite of the growing tendency to scepticism which expresses itself in the various forms of nominalism, realism, more or less crude, remains the dominant Christian philosophy.²

These characteristics of pre-Kantian thought find illustration in the prevailing conception of God. As the absolute Being, God exists quite independent of all finite things. The contrast between the human and the divine is carried to the highest degree. If we would rightly conceive the nature of God, we must think away all finite limitations, magnify to the uttermost extent the remaining perfections, and think of the Being who is thus obtained as at once the cause and the sovereign of all that is. The attributes in which the Being of God most characteristically expresses Himself are those which are farthest removed from our human experience — eternity, infinity, omnipresence, impassibility, incomprehensibility. Even the justice and the love of God are inscrutable; and before the mysterious authority of His sovereign will there is

¹ A good illustration of such a hypostasis is that of the church. The whole Catholic doctrine of the infallible authority of the church stands or falls with a philosophy which admits such a hypostasis. The best proof of this is the effect actually produced on church doctrine and authority by the growth of nominalism. Cf. Weber, *History of Philosophy*, p. 252 sq.

² This is true of Augustine (Cf. Loofs, *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 180); Thomas Aquinas (Loofs, p. 262), and Calvin, the representative theologians of the ancient church, of the Middle Ages, and of the Reformation.

no room for question, only for obedience.¹ Yet this same mysterious incomprehensible Being touches life in a thousand ways. He is not only the Creator and Preserver of all things; but through His Bible, His Church, His Christ He brings His greatness to bear directly upon the littleness of the creature, and makes it possible for finite men, even here and now, to attain to an experience of the Infinite.

Here we have a conception of God which is at once *a priori* and ontological. *A priori*, because its essence is made to consist in abstract conceptions divorced from experience; ontological, because the absolute Being thus obtained is conceived as the supreme reality.

¹ An excellent illustration of this view is found in chap. ii. 2 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. "God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in any need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them: he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, and upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, he is pleased to require of them." Here we have a conception of God which magnifies to the highest degree the difference between Him and the creature. This conception goes back through Calvin and the schoolmen to Augustine, and through him to Plato.

Within this general ontological conception, we may distinguish the Platonic and Aristotelian forms; the first, emphasizing the idea of substance, the second, that of will. We may take Augustine and, later, Anselm as representatives of the first class, while Duns Scotus is representative of the second. In Thomas Aquinas, as in Calvin, both elements are combined. And the same combination is found in the *Westminster Confession*. God is both supreme substance and sovereign will.

This combination is characteristic of historic Christian thought, both Catholic and Protestant. God is at once removed from all rational tests known to the creature, and yet at the same time is conceived as entering into his experience. Every phase of life, every subject of thought, even the most secret feelings and desires of the human soul are brought under the control of an inscrutable authority. Question and denial are alike impious.¹

While Catholic and Protestant, agreeing in this general conception of authority, were disputing as to where the voice of God had most clearly uttered itself, a modest German philosopher, in his study at Königsberg, was undermining the foundations upon which both alike rested.² In the famous "Critique" (1781; 2d

¹ Cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, Book III. xxiii. 2 (Vol. II. p. 562). "The will of God is the supreme rule of righteousness, so that everything which He wills must be held to be righteous by the mere fact of His willing it. Therefore, when it is asked why the Lord did so, we must answer, Because He pleased. But if you proceed farther to ask why He pleased, you ask for something greater and more sublime than the will of God, and nothing such can be found." Cf. p. 563, where he shows that, while God is not lawless, He is not bound to give an account of Himself.

Yet this same inscrutable God is ever active in experience, witnessing to His word, regenerating, sanctifying, etc. We find exactly the same combination in the theology of Roman Catholicism.

² The literature on Kant is too familiar as well as too voluminous to refer to here. A brief but convenient and well-selected bibliography of the more important works may be found in Weber's *History of Philosophy*, p. 434. The best book in English is still that of Caird (*The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, 2 vols. London and New York, 1889. The earlier work already referred to is still valuable). In what follows the works of Kant are cited from Kirchmann's edition in the *Philosophische Bibliothek*, Heidelberg. References to Hartenstein's edition of 1867 sq. are added in parentheses.

Of the facts of Kant's life it is only necessary to recall that he was

ed. 1787) which, taking up the question already raised by Locke and Hume,¹ attempts with a thoroughness greater than either a critical analysis of the powers of the human intellect, Kant showed conclusively that to know is by no means as simple a matter as it had hitherto been conceived to be. In knowledge mind contributes as much as it receives. The raw material of experience is moulded and shaped along certain definite lines according to a pattern contained within

born in 1724 (April 22) and that he died on Feb. 12, 1804, having spent all but nine years of his life in Königsberg, and those in East Prussia. *The Critique of Pure Reason* was published in 1781, after having been twelve years in preparation; *The Prolegomena to Every Future Metaphysical System* in 1783; *The Idea for a Universal History in a Cosmopolitan Point of View* in 1784; *The Foundation for a Metaphysic of Ethics* in 1785. *The Metaphysical Rudiments of Natural Philosophy* in 1786; the second edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason* in 1787; *The Critique of Practical Reason* in 1788; *The Critique of Judgment* in 1790; *The treatise on Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason* in 1793 (2d edition, 1794). For this he was censured by the government in 1794. Cf. the documents on both sides quoted in Wallace's *Kant*, pp. 72-74 (Philosophical Classics series, Edinburgh and Philadelphia, 1882).

¹ *I. e.*, as to the powers and limits of the human understanding. It is interesting to compare the form in which the question is stated by these pioneers of *Erkenntnisstheorie* with that in which it presented itself to Kant. Both to Locke and to Hume it is primarily a question of the origin of ideas, and is to be answered by observation of the working of the mind in experience. To Kant it is a question as to the powers of the mind as pure—*i. e.*, apart from all possible experience. The question whose answer Hume presupposes, when he says that we can know nothing of the powers of the mind save through experiment and observation (*Treatise on Human Nature*, Green's ed. I. p. 308) is the one which Kant proposes as the subject for inquiry. Cf. *Kritik*, Kirchmann's ed. p. 16 [H. II. p. 8]. By the critique of pure reason Kant understands "eine Kritik. . . nicht der Bücher und Systeme, sondern die des Vernunftmögens überhaupt, in Ansehung aller Erkenntnisse, zu denen sie, unabhängig von aller Erfahrung, streben mag." Cf. also Caird, I. p. 227 sq.

the mind itself. Space¹ and time;² substance, cause, and the rest; in short, all the categories of thought³ are not the purely objective things which they had been supposed to be. They are methods of the mind's activity, ideal forms imposed by reason upon experience, according to an inner law. There is, indeed, as philosophers before Kant had rightly affirmed, a noumenal world back of the world of phenomena. But it cannot hold the place either in thought or in life which has hitherto been assigned to it. It is a *Grenzbegriff*—a regulative concept, marking the limits of our knowledge.⁴ It is impossible with our finite faculties to attain a knowledge of transcendent realities. For so high a task we lack the requisite organ, and must be content with the lower world of experience. A rational

¹ For Kant's doctrine of Space, see the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, § 3, p. 76 [H. II. p. 65 sq.]. Negatively, it is not an attribute of things in themselves. Positively, it is "nichts anderes als nur die Form aller Erscheinungen äusserer Sinne d. i. die subjective Bedingung der Sinnlichkeit," p. 78 [H. II. p. 66].

² For Kant's doctrine of Time, *ibid.* § 4, p. 81 sq. [H. II. p. 69 sq.]. Negatively, time has no objective existence. Positively, it is the form of the inner sense, and, in addition, "die formale Bedingung a priori aller Erscheinungen überhaupt," p. 84 [H. II. p. 72].

On the *Aesthetic* in general, cf. Caird, I. p. 281 sq.

³ For Kant's doctrine of the categories, see the *Transcendental Analytic*, p. 109 sq. [H. II. p. 99 sq.]; also Caird, I. p. 320 sq.

⁴ *Kritik*, p. 264 [H. II. p. 250]. "Der Begriff eines Noumenon ist also bloss ein Grenzbegriff, um die Anmaassung der Sinnlichkeit einzuschränken, und also nur von negativem Gebrauche. Er ist aber gleichwohl nicht willkürlich erdichtet, sondern hängt mit der Einschränkung der Sinnlichkeit zusammen, ohne doch etwas Positives ausser dem Umfange derselben setzen zu können."

On Kant's doctrine of the noumenon, cf. in general the *Kritik*, p. 262 sq. [H. II. p. 246 sq.]; also Caird, II. pp. 632-634; Watson, *Kant and His English Critics*, chap. x. pp. 289-328 (New York, 1881).

demonstration of God, such as earlier philosophers had attempted, is therefore out of the question.¹

The first effect of this line of thought was wholly destructive. If even the most familiar objects of everyday life cannot be known as they are in themselves,² much less is this true of God. An absolute which enters into experience is a contradiction in terms. Thus the conception of God upon which Catholic and Protestant alike had confidently built is declared untenable. The idea, indeed, still remains as a necessary concept of the mind. But from thought to reality there is no bridge. The Absolute, if existent, is unknowable.³

¹ *E.g.* Descartes, in his famous ontological proof of the being of God. For Kant's criticism of this, as well as of the cosmological and teleological arguments, cf. *Kritik*, pp. 470-552 [H. II. pp. 451-538], with comments of Caird, II. p. 102 *sq.*

² Cf. Caird, II. p. 145. "Now, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant's argument is, that we cannot show the validity of the principles of science except in a way that limits them to the sphere of phenomena. To prove that they are true of objects is to prove that those objects are not things in themselves."

³ For the outcome of Kant's doctrine on its sceptical side, cf. Caird, I. p. 278 *sq.* "If we state the general problem of philosophy in the form in which Kant finally stated it, as the problem of 'the possibility of advancing by reason from the knowledge of the sensible to that of the supersensible,' the answer of the Critical Philosophy may be shortly summarized thus. If knowledge of the supersensible is possible, it must be rational or *a priori* knowledge; for only by an *a priori* process can we hope to deal with that which is beyond all sense. . . . But our *a priori* perceptions are essentially forms of sense, *i. e.*, they are forms of a matter which is essentially *a posteriori*, and therefore external and alien to the pure intelligence that apprehends it. Hence, neither they nor the matter that falls under them can be brought into perfect unity with the mind that knows them. The mind is never able to consummate the synthesis of its object with itself, and the forms of unity by which it determines sensible objects still leave these objects inadequately determined, according to that

This was the first effect. But Kant did not stop there. What he took away with one hand he gave back with the other. If God cannot be found by the intellect, He may be reached by the moral consciousness. Side by side with the theoretical reason there is a practical reason which has as its organ the conscience, in which the ultimate convictions of the moral nature express themselves with the force of a categorical imperative.¹ Here is the rightful home of such ideas as God, freedom, immortality. Whatever is needed for the realization of the moral ideal must be true.² Thus the Absolute denied to reason is given back at the behest of conscience.³

idea of knowledge which it carries with itself. Hence it is led to make the distinction of the noumena it can think from the phenomena it can know. But as the former are presented to it in no perception or intuition, it is obliged to recognize that it is incapable, so far, at least, as theoretical reason is concerned, of rising beyond the problematical existence of the noumena or of turning the thought of them into knowledge."

¹ On Kant's ethical theory, cf. Caird, II. pp. 143 sq.; also Abbott, *Kant's Theory of Ethics* (4th ed. London, 1889); Schurman, *Kantian Ethics and the Ethics of Evolution* (London, 1881); Adler, "A Critique of Kant's Ethics" (*Mind*, April, 1902, p. 162 sq.).

² Cf. *Religion*, p. 57 [H. VI. p. 213], "Denn wenn das moralische Gesetz gebietet, wir sollen jetzt bessere Menschen sein, so folgt unumgänglich, wir müssen es auch können."

³ To be sure, only as a necessary postulate, not as immediately given in experience. Cf. Preface to *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen des blossen Vernunft*, Kirchmann's ed. p. 1 sq. especially p. 3 [H. VI. p. 163]. "So ist es zwar nur eine Idee von einem Objekte, welches die formale Bedingung aller Zwecke, wie wir sie haben sollen (die Pflicht) und zugleich alles damit zusammenstimmende Bedingte aller derjenigen Zwecke, die wir haben (die jener ihrer Beobachtung angemessene Glückseligkeit), zusammen vereinigt in sich enthält, das ist, die Idee eines höchsten Guts in der Welt, zu dessen Möglichkeit wir ein höheres, moralisches, heiligstes und allvermögendes Wesen annehmen müssen, das allein beide Elemente desselben vereinigen kann. . . . Aber, was hier das Vornehmste ist, diese

We are not at present interested in the Kantian philosophy for its own sake. The question so often and so keenly debated, as to the true relation between the two poles of Kant's thought,¹ need not detain us here. Enough that in the founder of the critical philosophy two great streams of thought meet: the rationalistic type, represented by Descartes, by Leibnitz, and by Spinoza, seeking to interpret reality by eternal principles inherent in the nature of reason; the empirical, represented by Locke and Hume, pointing to experience as the sole trustworthy source of knowledge, and sceptical of all attempts to press back of experience

Idee geht aus der Moral hervor, und ist nicht die Grundlage derselben." Cf. Caird, II. p. 294; also his criticism, p. 301 sq. p. 505 sq. Of a religious knowledge of God through the feelings, such as that for which Schleiermacher contended, Kant has no conception. As Weber has well said (*History of Philosophy*, p. 466), "The real God of Kant is Freedom in the service of the ideal." Cf. the celebrated sentence in the *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*. "Es ist überall nichts in der Welt, ja überhaupt auch ausser derselben zu denken möglich, was ohne Einschränkung für gut konnte gehalten werden, als allein ein *Guter Wille*" [H. IV. p. 10].

¹ I. e., whether we have to do with a consistent system, of which the several parts are essential elements, conceived as such by their author from the first; or whether the later moral doctrine of Kant is a subsequent addition, modifying, if not essentially abandoning the principles of his earlier teaching. The arguments in favor of the former view have been ably presented by Caird, I. p. 228 sq.; II. p. 141 sq., where, after calling attention to the apparent dualism of the two former Critiques, he bids us remember that "even this dualistic view of the world, by which the theoretical and practical life are put in abstract opposition to each other, is not Kant's last word. For, in the *Critique of Judgment*, he again attempts to bring together the two spheres of existence, which hitherto he had made it his main aim to separate and oppose." Thus the *Critique of Judgment* may be interpreted as the conclusion of an argument, of which the *Critique of Pure* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* are respectively the major and the minor premises. Cf. in this connection the striking quotation from the *Critique of Practical Reason*, given by Stirling, *Secret of Hegel*, p. 61 (quoted on p. 187, note 2).

to things in themselves. This double relationship to rationalism on the one hand and empiricism on the other forces the critical question into the forefront of Kant's thinking; and it is as the father of modern criticism that we have here alone to do with him.

It is not necessary here to follow the development of post-Kantian thought. Two sharply contrasted tendencies make themselves manifest, each going back to the philosopher of Königsberg, and claiming him as father. There is the speculative tendency, represented by Hegel;¹ jealous of the rights of intellect, unwilling to be satisfied with the dualism of the critiques, seeking to win back for the Absolute its old place as the central principle of knowledge, gathering into the unity of great systems the most diverse elements of intellectual, ethical, and æsthetic life. There is, on the other hand, the sceptical tendency which culminates in positivism;² accusing the master of weakness and inconsistency in retaining in ethics a conception which he had banished from the other sides of life, seeing in

¹ On Hegel's relation to Kant, cf. Weber, p. 450. As illustrating the connection between Kant's own teaching and later speculative philosophy, Caird's criticisms of the *Critique* are full of instruction. See also Stirling, *op. cit.*

² Positivism is here mentioned simply as the best-known representative of that agnostic tendency which historically has been one great outcome of the Kantian criticism. Comte himself, in spite of his acknowledgment of indebtedness to Kant (see his letter to d'Eichthal of Dec. 10, 1824, quoted in Weber, p. 472) had slight acquaintance with his works, and, as Caird has shown, very imperfectly understood his theory of knowledge. On Comte, see Caird, *The Social Philosophy and Religion of Comte*, 1893. The direct propagation of the sceptical tendencies of Kant is through the movement known as Neo-Kantianism. This, though historically independent of positivism, holds positions in many respects similar. Cf. Höffding, *History of Philosophy*, Eng. tr. II. p. 541; Weber, p. 584.

the Absolute in every form a conception as dangerous as it is deceptive, an *ignis fatuus* of the mind, certain to lead even the most robust intellect astray, needing therefore to be pursued and destroyed with a relentless intolerance worthy of Voltaire. Yet both alike, the speculative and the agnostic, however widely separated in other respects, agree in this: that there can be no true knowledge without a previous investigation of the organ of knowledge; that no attempt to reach a scientific conception of the universe can be successful which ignores the rights of the human mind.¹ The fact that our modern study of religion deals so largely with psychological questions is due primarily to the influence of Kant.²

¹ The importance of *Erkenntnisstheorie* in the Hegelian philosophy is well known. Comte's own theory of knowledge is crude enough. He has small patience with those who elaborately determine "the respective contributions of the internal and the external in the production of knowledge." Enough that each contributes its part, that our knowledge is subjective and relative, and that it is this limited and subjective knowledge, with which alone we have to do (cf. the quotation given in Caird, p. 69. See, also, on Comte's theory of knowledge, Höffding, II. p. 351). In contrast to the French school, the German Neo-Kantians pay great attention to the problem of knowledge (e. g. Dühring. Cf. Höffding, II. p. 554 sq.).

² It need hardly be said that Kant is here taken simply as the chief representative of that great movement, which, beginning with Locke and Hume, has so largely transformed our mental life. If any one chooses to believe, with Professor James (*Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results*, p. 23) that the psychological impulse given by the early English philosophers might have wrought its beneficent results equally well without Kant's help, it is impossible to contradict him. Historically it cannot be denied that, whether for good or evil, it is through Kant that the new point of view became dominant in modern thought; and of no phase of it is this more true than in the case of religion.

2. *The Awakening of the Historical Spirit.*

Side by side with the philosophical influence which we have just described there was at work another, which for want of a better name we may call the historical spirit. By this we mean the effort to conceive of life, as a whole and in all its parts, according to the principle of growth. History, as the modern man conceives it, is the creation of the scientific spirit; one of the many fruits of the great intellectual movement, which, beginning modestly in the researches of a few isolated students, has come at last to dominate our entire mental life. By the scientific spirit we mean the spirit which observes patiently that it may define accurately; the spirit of minute and exhaustive research, which gathers its materials from the widest possible field, and extends its investigations over the longest periods of time, that it may gain a basis for generalizations fitted to serve as a safe point of departure both for thought and action. It is the spirit which takes nothing on trust, which seeks a reason for everything, and which deems no labor too great, and no investigation too humble, which shall minister, however remotely, to this end. Of this spirit, we repeat, modern history is the child.

It is difficult for us, made familiar from childhood with the principle of development, to realize how comparatively recent is this entire point of view. History, as the modern man conceives it, is scarcely more than a century old.¹ Kant himself, for all his critical acumen,

¹ On the beginnings of a philosophical conception of history, cf. Flint, *Historical Philosophy in France* (New York, 1894. An earlier work,

shared the unhistorical views of his day.¹ It was reserved for his contemporary Herder, in his "Ideen

Edinburgh, 1874, includes Germany). After tracing the growth of certain great ideas which history presupposes (*i.e.* progress, humanity, and freedom), he shows that it is only since the Reformation that these have been sufficiently developed to make a really scientific conception of history possible.

In France he makes the beginning with Bodin (1530-1596), the greatest political philosopher before Montesquieu (p. 191) — a man, who, in his *Colloquium Heptaplomeres* (written 1593, first published 1841, with a German translation by Guhrauer), a treatise curiously modern in spirit, brings forward the idea of a "progressive revelation through a sequence of wise men, before as well as alongside of the Mosaic, Christian, and Mohammedan religions" (Höffding, *op. cit.* I. p. 60). Bodin shows himself possessed both of the ideas of law and of progress, but the account given of his work by Flint (p. 193) shows that he is far removed from having a true conception of history, as we understand it to-day. Passing to the seventeenth century, we find that Descartes did little for the study of history, his interest lying along other lines. Even the eighteenth century, for all its interest in historical study, lacks the great idea which alone can unlock the secrets of the past. Turgot alone, of its great names, has the idea of progress. In Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, it is conspicuous by its absence. The age of the *Social Contract*, and of natural religion was not the age which could understand a great historical phenomenon like the rise of Christianity. We shall have abundant illustration of this as we proceed.

In Germany the historical movement may be said to begin with Lessing (1729-1781) and Herder (1744-1803). A year before his death, the former published a little book on *The Education of the Human Race*, in which, with a clearness and beauty of style hitherto unsurpassed, he develops the idea of revelation as a progressive training of mankind in divine truth. Still more important was the influence of Herder's great book, *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1791), of which Flint has said (*Philosophy of History in France and Germany*, p. 376), that "as regards the philosophy of history, after all that the illustrious chiefs of modern German philosophy have done or caused to be done, there is still need to go back" to its teachings. With these two books the modern view of history may be said to have begun.

¹ On the unhistorical character of Kant's time, cf. Caird, I. p. 69. "The individualistic tendencies of the age of enlightenment, which separated each man from the unity of the social organism to which he be-

zur Geschichte der Menschheit" (1784-91) to point the way to a more profound and intelligent conception. But, however long delayed, the new insight came at last, and with it a flood of light was poured into many a dark corner of the past. Under the guidance of the principle of development, mysteries thought insoluble have been cleared up. Variations or contradictions either denied or explained away have fallen easily into place as different stages in one and the same process. What was at first applied to external objects has been transferred to the world of thought. Ideas are seen to have a history as well as institutions. Philosophies have their genealogy as well as individuals. Nothing is stationary. All things are changing. Constitutions, traditions, beliefs, habits, systems—all are in a state of flux. In the highest things as in the lowest, growth is the law of life.

Once clearly apprehended, it was inevitable that a principle so fruitful should receive universal application. What had been tried with success in profane history was certain to be attempted in the field of religion. If secular constitutions had grown, the law of the church had not remained stationary. If philosophies had changed, the same was true of doctrines. Christianity itself, instead of being isolated from its environment, as heretofore, was now conceived as but

longed, separated him from the past out of which his intellectual life had grown. . . . In this respect Kant shares in the individualistic and unhistorical modes of thought characteristic of his time." Cf., for example, his treatise on Religion, or his *Idea for a Universal History in a Cosmopolitan Point of View*. It may be noted that he severely criticized Herder's views.

one great step in the divine education of mankind.¹ Biblical criticism, coming to the study of Scripture with impartial eyes, discovered variations and differences which the dogma of inspiration had obscured, and sought to retrace the gradual steps through which the books we call our Bible have assumed their present form.² In like manner, historians of doctrine have analyzed the process through which the most mysterious dogmas of the faith have grown to be what they are.³ Even the Catholic church has not remained unaffected by the new light, and, in the person of a Newman, has sought to show that the acceptance of the principle of development is not inconsistent with the recognition of the authority of an infallible church.⁴

¹ So by Lessing, in his *Education of the Human Race*.

² On the history of the Higher Criticism, cf. Briggs, *Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture*, chap. xi. p. 247 sq.; also G. A. Smith, *Modern Criticism and the preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 29 sq.; Nash, *The History of the Higher Criticism of the New Testament*, New York, 1900.

Among those who contributed to bring about a more intelligent understanding of the Bible, Herder occupies a conspicuous place. He insisted that the Bible was a human book, to be read in the light of its times, and with due regard to the differing circumstances out of which its different books had arisen. Christ was to him the most human as well as the most divine of teachers, and the Gospel which He preached was one of the "purest humanity."

³ So especially by Baur, in his *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, and his great monographs on the history of the Christian doctrine of Reconciliation, and of the Trinity and the Incarnation.

⁴ Cf. his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, and especially the fifth chapter of the *Apologia*, where he distinguishes between the doctrine which is stationary and the definition which is changing. A good instance of the modern Catholic standpoint is given in Hogan's *Clerical Studies* (Boston, 1898). Cf. especially p. 162: "Theology, then, is progressive, essentially progressive, not after the fashion of the physical sciences, but like history and philosophy, upon which it is mainly

Under the circumstances the question as to the nature of Christianity has assumed a new meaning.

But the influences which have led to a restatement of the question have not been wholly internal. Side by side with the intellectual movement there has gone a material development without parallel. The nineteenth century has been an age of exploration as well as of research. Vast areas, hitherto unknown or practically so, have been brought by commerce into intimate contact with Western civilization. Christian missions have been reborn, and, with their enlarging success, have brought Christendom for the first time in many centuries face to face with the non-Christian religions. The facts which had hitherto been disparagingly classed together under the single term heathenism, or constructed *a priori* by theologian and philosopher into the framework of an artificial and wholly impossible religion of nature,¹ have come to be recognized in their wonderful variety and complexity as containing both more and less than had hitherto been supposed. For the first time since the days of the beginnings Christianity has been clearly recognized as a historic religion, one among many, and the question as to its relation to the older forms has become a pressing one.

Out of the effort to answer this question the science

built." Cf. also Schell, *Der Katholicismus als Princip des Fortschritts*², Würzburg, 1897; *Die neue Zeit und der alte Glaube*, 1898.

¹ On the ambiguity of the term natural theology, see Gordon, *New Epoch for Faith*, p. 110. For a good illustration, compare Locke (*Reasonableness of Christianity*, Works, VII. p. 133, natural theology as including "the way of atoning the merciful . . . Father") with *West. Conf.* i. 1.

of Comparative Religion has been born. Taking the methods already so fruitfully employed in other branches of research, it has sought to apply them to this new and most fascinating field. Gathering its materials from the widest possible range, it has sought to determine what are the characteristics of the religious life as such. Ignoring for the moment the marks which separate the several religions from one another, it has asked, what are the traits common to all? How distinguish religion as a peculiar function of the human spirit from other human activities and experiences? What are the constant elements which lie back of its varying manifestations? Having thus gained a conception of religion in general, it has then gone on to investigate the characteristics of the several different religions, to trace their genesis and history, to study their relations and inter-relations, to distinguish their peculiar characteristics, and thus, on the basis of an exhaustive comparison, to answer the question which most perfectly realizes the religious ideal. The Christian apologist, seeking to justify the claim of his own religion to a position of unique authority, finds himself confronted with a whole circle of questions unknown to his predecessors, and obliged to shape his answer accordingly. Under the circumstances, it is not strange if the question as to the nature of Christianity should require radical restatement.

3. *Retrospect. The Conception of Christianity in the Writers of the Eighteenth Century.*

It will help us to appreciate the new world of thought in which nineteenth century theology moves, if at this point, in order to establish a standard of comparison, we pass briefly in review the conceptions of Christianity which we find in the great writers on religion and philosophy of the eighteenth.¹ In general we may distinguish four main tendencies, each of which has its typical representative.

1. There is first the view which regards Christianity as a corruption of the true religion, an evil to be opposed, and, if possible, to be destroyed. Voltaire may serve as spokesman for this view.

2. There is the view which identifies Christianity with the religion of nature, seeing in it a republication or purification of the religion which is open to all men by the light of reason, and which they might and should have attained even without special revelation.² This is the view of historic deism, and also in substance of Spinoza and of Leibnitz. We may take Kant as its classical representative.

3. There is the view which distinguishes historic

¹ The term is used somewhat loosely, a few writers (*e. g.* Spinoza and Locke) having been included, whose work falls within the latter part of the seventeenth century.

² The affinity of this view with that of traditional theology is too apparent to need comment. In both cases Christianity is identified with the content of true religion, wherever found. The only difference is that in the one case true religion is thought of as including certain supernatural elements, whereas in the other case these are not regarded as essential.

Christianity from natural religion as constituting a higher type. The latter is recognized as a distinct form of religion, and as legitimate as far as it goes; but it is a lower stage, needing to be supplemented and completed by supernatural religion. This is in general the view of the more thoughtful apologists of the deistic controversy. It appears in the title of Jeffery's celebrated treatise, "Christianity, the perfection of all religion, natural and revealed" (1728). It is represented in Bishop Butler's famous "Analogy." As to the content of revealed religion, there is some difference of opinion, but in general it is identified with the contents of Scripture, its characteristic mark being certain supernatural doctrines (*i. e.* Trinity, incarnation, etc.) undiscoverable by reason, though not, according to the best apologists, repugnant to it. As supernatural, all the doctrines of revealed religion stand on the same level of authority, and there is little attempt to discriminate between them.¹ A highly interesting attempt at a more scientific conception is given in Locke's "Reasonableness of Christianity,"² a treatise whose eminent sanity, sound exegetical sense and clear apprehension of the question at issue have not yet received the recognition they deserve. We may take Locke as the representative of our third class.³

¹ Yet cf. Jeffery's treatment of Old Testament prophecy, referred to by Pünjer, *op. cit.* p. 353. I regret that I have been unable to consult this important work at first hand.

² *The Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures* (1695).

³ Though most of his life falls in the seventeenth century, in spirit he belongs with the men of the eighteenth, with whom we here classify him.

4. Finally we note the tendency to regard Christianity as but one historic stage in the approach to a perfect or absolute religion, still to be revealed. This view is represented by Lessing in his "Education of the Human Race," a treatise whose originality and independence have been much exaggerated,¹ but whose clear distinction of historic Christianity from Judaism on the one hand, and the final religion on the other, renders it worthy of selection as representative of our fourth type.

These four tendencies cross and recross. Leibnitz, to whom Christianity is essentially a natural religion, distinguishes clearly between Christ's teaching and that of Moses, and regards the former as introducing a distinctly higher stage of the religious life.² Kant, while identifying Christianity with the religion of pure reason, makes an honest attempt to include within the latter, doctrines (*e. g.* original sin, atonement) which, as a matter of fact, are characteristic of historic Christianity.³ Some of the deists had a keen sense for the problem presented by the rise of the different historic religions (so especially Hume,⁴ and among the earlier

¹ Many of the leading ideas of Lessing's book are anticipated by Leibnitz in his *Theodicée*, notably the view of Christ as the first trustworthy teacher of immortality. Cf. Preface (*Philosophical Works*, ed. Gerhardt, Berlin, 1885, Vol. VI. p. 26). "Cependant Moÿse n'avoit point fait entrer dans ses loix la doctrine de l'immortalité des âmes : elle estoit conforme à ses sentimens, elle s'enseignoit de main en main, mais elle n'estoit point autorisée d'une manière populaire, jusqu'à ce que Jésus-Christ leva le voile," etc. With this cf. Lessing: "Und so ward Christus der erste zuverlässige, praktische Lehrer der Usterblichkeit der Seele." (*Erziehung*, § 58).

² *Ibid.* p. 27: "Jésus-Christ, achevant ce que Moÿse avoit commencé."

³ Cf. especially Books I. and II. of the *Religion*.

⁴ Notably in his treatise on the *Natural History of Religion*.

writers Lord Herbert and Shaftesbury). For others (*e. g.* Tindal) it does not exist. Even Herder, for all his historic sense, seems to have had no appreciation of the relative right of the later forms of historic Christianity, and contrasts the religion of Jesus, as that of universal humanity, with the "arbitrary doctrines" of His successors.¹

Out of these discussions we see gradually emerging the question, What is essential Christianity? Does it include all that has come down to us under that name, or must it be confined to the teaching of Christ Himself as opposed to His disciples? Here again we find decided differences of opinion, some (as Leibnitz, Kant, Herder) contrasting Christ's own teaching with that of His disciples, and seeing in the latter a corruption of primitive Christianity, others (so most apologists) regarding the entire contents of the New Testament as belonging thereto. Locke takes a middle course, regarding faith in Christ as a necessary part of Christianity, but clearly distinguishing saving faith as a simple matter, open to the unlearned, from the acceptance of such difficult doctrines as the Trinity or the atonement.

In view of the importance of the subject, it may be worth while briefly to review the conception of Christianity held by each of the four writers whom we have selected as typical.

¹ It is a curious fact that Kant, with his individualistic ethics and his absence of historic sense, should have had a truer appreciation of the relative rights of historic Christianity than Herder. On the reasons for the latter's failure, cf. Pfleiderer, *Development of Theology in Germany since Kant*, etc. p. 41.

To begin with the most radical: Voltaire¹ met Christianity in the form of a corrupt Roman Catholicism. Unlike the English deists, who distinguished Jesus' own teaching as true Christianity from later corruptions, he regarded all positive religion as superstitious and mistaken.² Of Jesus personally he commonly speaks with a respect not unmingled with patronage, as a good man, a teacher of sound morals, and of universal benevolence.³ Like many another sectary,⁴ He pro-

¹ Among the works in which Voltaire discusses the origin of Christianity are *Le Diner du Comte de Boulainvilliers* (1767, published anonymously, Œuvres, Paris, 1897, Vol. XXVI. p. 531 sq.); *Dieu et les Hommes, par le docteur Obery, Œuvre Théologique, mais raisonnable, traduite par Jacques Aimon* (1769, Œuvres, XXVIII. p. 129 sq.); and the articles on Religion and Christianisme in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*. Cf. also his *De la paix perpétuelle par le docteur Goodheart* (1769, Œuvres, XXVIII. p. 103 sq.); *Homélie du pasteur Bourn* (1768, Œuvres, XXVII. p. 227 sq.) and his *Épître à Uranie*.

On Voltaire's views of Christianity, cf. Bungener, *Voltaire et son Temps* (Paris, 1851), Vol. II. p. 254 sq.; Strauss, *Voltaire: sechs Vorträge*², Leipzig, 1870; and Pünjer, *History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. tr. p. 457, 458.

² It is no doubt easy to exaggerate the negative aspect of Voltaire's teaching. Stripped of its passion and rhetoric, it has many points of contact with that of the English deists. Yet in the bitterness of its invective against positive religion in all its forms, and in its absence of appreciation of the originality and greatness of Jesus, it may well be taken as constituting a different type. Hume, with whom it would be most natural to compare Voltaire, has little to say directly of Christianity. Yet note his comparison of monotheism and polytheism, to the disadvantage of the former (*Natural History of Religion*, sec. ix.).

³ Compare the celebrated passage in the *Dictionnaire* (art. Religion), where Jesus is represented among the other sages as one who had suffered for his loyalty to truth. Also *Dieu et les Hommes*, chap. xxxiii. (Œuvres, XXVIII. p. 200), where Voltaire contends that Jesus was probably a teacher of sound morals, and whatever is not consistent with this view in

⁴ He more than once compares him to George Fox (e. g. *Dieu et les Hommes*, chap. xxxi.).

claimed Himself a prophet, and gathered disciples from the lower orders of the people.¹ But He was in no sense the founder of a new religion.² From first to last He remained a Jew, following the practices and holding the faith of His fathers. The religion we call Christianity arose after His death, through a variety of causes, most of them discreditable. Chief of these were the frauds perpetrated by the disciples of Jesus.³ At first deceived by the alleged miracles of their master, they became knaves, and maintained themselves by the use of forgery on a colossal scale. A show of respectability was given the new religion by its alliance with Alexandrian Gospels is to be regarded as a forgery; *Homélie*, p. 230: "Jesus fut plus que Juif; il fut homme: il embrassa tous les hommes dans sa charité."

Yet elsewhere he speaks disparagingly of Jesus as an insignificant sectary, not sufficiently important to receive mention in the writings of contemporary historians, and contrasts him with Mohammed to his disadvantage (*Diner*, p. 546: "Du moins Mahomet a écrit et combattu; et Jésus n'a su ni écrire ni se défendre. Mahomet avait le courage d'Alexandre avec l'esprit de Numa; et votre Jésus a sué sang et eau, des qu'il a été condamné par ses juges").

¹ *Diner*, p. 547: The most probable view of Jesus is "qu'il était un Juif de bonne foi qui voulait se faire valoir auprès du peuple, comme les fondateurs des récabites, des esséniens, etc. . . . il est probable qu'il mit quelques femmes dans son parti, ainsi que tous ceux qui voulurent être chefs de secte . . ." Cf. p. 546: "La plus vile canaille, laquelle seule embrassa le Christianisme pendant cent années."

² *Dictionnaire*, art. Religion: When Jesus is asked whether He was put to death for teaching a new religion, He denies it, and declares that He remained in all things faithful to the Jews' religion. Cf. *Dieu et les Hommes*, pp. 203, 204. In the dialogue between a Christian and a Jew recorded in *De la Paix Perpétuelle*, the Jew claims Jesus as one of his own fellow religionists.

³ *Diner*, p. 546: "Voilà les fondements de la religion chrétienne. Vous n'y voyez qu'un tissu des plus plates impostures, faites par la plus vile canaille." Cf. *Dieu et les Hommes*, chap. xxxvi. p. 211 sq.: "Fraudes innombrables des chrétiens."

drian Platonism.¹ By the accession of Constantine it had become strong enough boldly to proclaim its true character, and to enforce its will, as it has done ever since, by persecution and tyranny.²

Against this corrupt and dangerous superstition Voltaire sets the religion of reason which has but two articles, love to God, and love to one's neighbor.³ If any one chooses to call this Christianity, he is at liberty to do so, as a concession to common usage; and worship in the name of Jesus may even be allowed. But all that has hitherto been characteristic of historic Christianity must be taken away.⁴

Kant also has a keen sense of the evils of historic Christianity,⁵ but it is consistent with the highest regard

¹ *Diner*, p. 548: "Il est avéré que ses disciples furent tres-obscurés jusqu'à ce qu'ils eussent rencontrés quelques platoniciens dans Alexandrie qui étayèrent les rêveries des galiléens par les rêveries de platon."

² *Diner*, p. 548: "Alors les fripons furent sanguinaires," etc. Cf. p. 550 (Christianity the only one of the ancient sects to persecute).

³ *Homélie*, p. 233. Cf. *Dictionnaire*, art. Religion: "Je le conjura, seulement de m'apprendre en quoi consistait la vraie religion. 'Ne vous l'ai je pas déjà dit? Aimez Dieu at votre prochain comme vous-même.'" "

⁴ *Dieu et les Hommes*, chap. xliii. p. 237 sq.: "Nous proposons de conserver dans la morale de Jésus tous ce qui est conforme à la raison universelle, à celle de tous les grands philosophes de l'antiquité, à celle de tous les temps et de tous les lieux, à celle qui doit être l'éternel lien de toutes les sociétés. Adorons l'Être suprême par Jésus, puisque la chose est établie ainsi parmi nous. Les cinq lettres qui composent son nom ne sont certainement pas un crime. Qu'importe que nous rendions nos hommages à l'Être suprême par Confucius, par Marc-Aurèle, par Jésus, ou par un autre, pourvu que nous soyons justes? La religion consiste assurément dans la vertu, et non dans le fatras impertinent de la théologie. La morale vient de Dieu, elle est uniforme partout. La théologie vient des hommes, elle est partout différente et ridicule, on l'a dit souvent, et il faut le redire toujours."

⁵ See especially the long sentence in the *Religion* beginning "Wie mystische Schwärmereien," etc. Pp. 155-157, Kirchmann's edition [H. VI.

for the character and teachings of Jesus, in whom he sees the founder of the universal church. His view of Christianity is given in his treatise on "Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason" (1793). True religion, being the outgrowth of ethics, must be such, and such only, as each man may construct for himself without historic mediation. Kant accordingly proceeds with such an *a priori* construction, which he afterwards follows by a comparison with historic Christianity. Thus, for example, the truth of original sin lies in the fact that we are obliged to posit as the cause of our actual sins an intelligible or noumenal choice, antedating experience. So, in the case of the atonement and justification, the real meaning is to be found in experiences of the individual moral life. When I turn from sin to righteousness, the consequence of my former sinful acts continues, and the acceptance of these by the now righteous self constitutes a sort of innocent suffering for the guilty. So the great truths of historic Christianity are, as it were, types or parables of various aspects of the individual spiritual experience.

Yet, while in one aspect purely individual, in another the ethical ideal leads man to seek union with his fellows, in order to the building up of his own moral life. This is possible practically only through a church, which in turn takes for granted historic revelation. This is, to be sure, a concession to human weakness, since historic faith cannot be required of every man as

pp. 306-308]. Looking out over the long list of evils and abuses of which historic Christianity is so prolific, Kant well can understand how one might be moved to utter the Lucretian cry, "*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.*"

can the pure religion of reason.¹ Yet experience seems to show that practically it cannot be avoided. We have thus the contrast between true religion which is universal, and the various historic faiths which more or less perfectly express or misrepresent it.² Here is the point at which Kant is brought to his estimate of Christianity. Christianity, by which he means the religion of Jesus, is really the beginning of universal church history. Judaism, which is a narrow and external faith, scarcely deserves the name of religion.³ Jesus took the essential content of the religion of nature, and, associating it with certain simple statutes, became the founder of the universal church.⁴ In the Christianity

¹ *Religion*, p. 129 [H. VI. p. 281]: "Wir haben angemerkt, dass, obzwar eine Kirche das wichtigste Merkmal ihrer Wahrheit, nämlich das eines rechtmässigen Anspruchs auf Allgemeinheit entbehrt, wenn sie sich auf einen Offenbarungsglauben, der als historischer. . . . Glaube doch keiner allgemeinen überzeugenden Mittheilung fähig ist, gründet, dennoch wegen des natürlichen Bedürfnisses aller Menschen zu den höchsten Vernunftbegriffen und Gründen immer etwas Sinnlichhaltbares, irgend eine Erfahrungsbestätigung u. dergl. zu verlangen, . . . irgend ein historischer Kirchenglaube, den man auch gemeiniglich schon vor sich findet, müsse benutzt werden." Cf. also p. 128: "Einen besondern Offenbarungsglauben . . . der als historisch nimmermehr von Jedermann gefordert werden kann."

² P. 127 [H. VI. p. 279]: "Es ist nur eine (wahre) Religion; aber es kann vielerlei Arten des Glaubens geben . . . Es ist daher schicklicher (wie es auch wirklich mehr im Gebrauche ist) zu sagen: dieser Mensch ist von diesem oder jenem (jüdischen, muhamedanischen, christlichen, katholischen, lutherischen) Glauben, als: er ist von dieser oder jener Religion."

³ P. 149 [H. VI. p. 300]: "Das (Judentum) ist eigentlich gar keine Religion, sondern blos Vereinigung einer Menge Menschen, die, da sie zu einem besondern Stamm gehörten, sich zu einem gemeinen Wesen unter blos politischen Gesetzen, mithin nicht zu einer Kirche formten," etc.

⁴ A universal church can arise only when ecclesiastical faith recognizes its dependence upon "the universal, unchangeable, pure faith of religion,"

of Jesus, which consists of the highest ethics, reinforced by the purest motives, we have "a complete religion which can be laid before all men in a form to be grasped by their reason and to win their conviction," and which, moreover, is illustrated by an example whose normative character they cannot but recognize.¹ With this Kant contrasts later Christianity as a religion of tradition, appealing to history, and including in its requirements elements which make no part of true religion.²

This attempt of Kant's is most interesting. Its inadequacy as an account of historic Christianity needs no extended demonstration. Not only does he allegorize the specific Christian doctrines till their adherents would not recognize them, but he completely shifts the centre of emphasis, relegating to a subordinate and unimportant place that central fact, which to the early disciples made out the heart of their religion. As Caird has well remarked, his failure to make room within the consciousness of man for the consciousness of God as

and publicly admits the necessity of the agreement of its own teachings therewith. P. 148 [H. VI. p. 299]. This actually happened under Jesus, in whom we find a complete abandonment of the principles of Judaism, and "a complete revolution in the doctrines of faith, based upon an entirely new principle." P. 152 [H. VI. p. 203]. Cf. also pp. 188, 189 [H. VI. pp. 337-339].

¹ *Religion*, p. 194 [H. VI. p. 314]. Cf. also p. 152 *sq.* [H. VI. p. 303]: "Aus dem Judentum also . . . erhob sich nun plötzich, obzwar nicht unvorbereitet, das Christentum," etc.

² Cf. p. 194 *sq.* [H. VI. p. 314]: "Die christliche Religion als gelehrte Religion," especially p. 198 [H. VI. p. 346], where Kant speaks of the clever procedure of the first Christian missionaries, who, "in order to gain access to their people, proclaimed it as a part of religion itself and valid everywhere and always that every Christian must become a Jew, whose Messiah had come (ein jede Christ musste ein Jude sein, dessen Messias gekommen ist)."

"the absolute principle of all reality," leads him necessarily to "reject as mysticism, or as involving the negation of moral freedom, that very idea which gives its great moral power to Christianity, viz., the idea of a real objective mediation, by which the individual is raised above himself. Thus he saves his morality at the cost of his religion."¹ In all this he is typical of a wide-spread tendency. Not only the deists, with their purely individualistic view of religion;² not only

¹ II. p. 619. The whole passage is instructive. Cf. also p. 623: "Now, the essential characteristic of religion, and especially of the Christian religion, lies in this, that it takes as absolute truth what Kant regards as a mere type, and calls upon the Christian to renounce as inadequate and superficial, the very view of man's moral life which Kant treats as absolute truth. In this point of view, we may regard St. Paul's epistle to the Romans as the classical exposition of the Christian view of spiritual life, in opposition to a view of it closely analogous to the Kantian."

The legalism of Kant's own view appears in his famous definition of religion, as "the recognition of all our duties as divine commands." *Religion*, p. 183 [H. VI. p. 303]. Cf. also p. 201 [H. p. 350]: "Die wahre alleinige Religion enthält nichts, als Gesetze, d. i. solche praktische Prinzipien, deren unbedingter Nothwendigkeit wir uns bewusst werden können, die wir also, als durch reine Vernunft (nicht empirisch) offenbart, anerkennen"; together with its corollary, p. 204 [H. p. 353]: "Alles, was ausser dem guten Lebenswandel der Mensch noch thun zu können vermeint, um Gott wohlgefällig zu werden, ist blosser Religionswahn und Afterdienst Gottes."

² For a full account of the views of the leading English deists, see Pünjer, *op. cit.* pp. 284-388. He defines deism as "a general movement in the way of intellectual inquiry and investigation regarding religion, with the tendency to derive all positive religions from one 'natural' religion" (p. 291). A more definite definition, he thinks, can hardly be given, in view of the wide variety of treatment which the movement includes. He calls special attention to the contrast between historical deism, with its strong faith in God's present and constant activity upon the world through Providence, and the later dogmatic deism, which denies the latter, and regards God as an absentee (pp. 289, 290).

Historically Pünjer distinguishes three periods in English deism.

Leibnitz, to whom religion is primarily a matter of

1, that of the beginnings (Lord Herbert, Sir Thomas Browne, Hobbes etc.); 2, that of the full development, introduced by Locke, and including Toland, Collins, Shaftesbury, Tindal, Chubb, and Morgan; and 3, the closing period, represented by Hume.

The views of the leading deists on our subject may be briefly summarized as follows:

Period I.

Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1581-1633) makes universal consent the supreme test of religious truth. By this rule he obtains the following five points: 1, There exists a supreme God; 2, He ought to be worshipped; 3, Virtue and piety form the main part of His worship; 4, Sins must be repented of and expiated; 5, After this life we receive rewards and punishments. The various positive religions arise through corruption of this true religion. There is no special treatment of Christianity. Cf. Pünjer, p. 294 sq..

Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1681) distinguishes between the religion of Christ and later Christianity, and shows himself indifferent to the special doctrines of the latter. The content of Christ's religion is made extremely simple and vague (Pünjer, p. 300 sq.).

More favorably disposed to ecclesiastical Christianity is Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). In his *Leviathan*, he distinguishes: 1, natural religion; 2, natural political religion; 3, prophetic religion. In the former, each man worships God according to reason. In the second, the state prescribes things in themselves indifferent as parts of worship, yet cannot regulate internal faith, nor require the dishonoring of God. Besides these we have prophetic religion which comes to us through the Bible. This may give what surpasses reason, but not what contradicts it. The proof of Scripture is partly the annunciation of the religion already received, partly miracles. The kingdom of God was founded by prophetic revelation, and restored by Christ, who promised future salvation, and revealed forgiveness and obedience as conditions of entrance. The one necessary article of Christian faith is that Jesus is the Christ (Cf. especially *Leviathan*, p. 584 sq., Works, ed. Molesworth, Vol. III.; also Pünjer, p. 306 sq.).

Period II.

Of John Locke (1632-1704) we shall speak presently more at length. His most important works are his *Letters on Toleration* (1689-1692), and his *Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695).

John Toland (1670-1722), in his *Christiunity not Mysterious* (1696), distinguishes between the religion of Jesus and later corruptions.

public order and prescription,¹ but even Spinoza, in his

Shaftesbury (1671-1713), discusses the origin of the several historic religions. Christianity is not dealt with in detail, yet so far as it goes his judgment is favorable. Cf. Pünjer, p. 336. "The purpose of religion generally is to awaken in us all moral inclinations and sentiments, and to make us more perfect and accomplished in the practice of all duties; yet this is not to be done by a reference to reward and punishment, but by the inner relationship between religion and virtue. The Christian religion realizes this purpose in the highest degree by implanting an all-embracing love."

Matthew Tindal (1656-1753) in his *Christianity as old as the Creation; or, the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (London, 1730), takes the position that true religion is always necessarily the same. It is essentially a law prescribing conduct.

Thomas Chubb (1679-1747) teaches that "Christianity consists ob-

¹ Leibnitz's view of Christianity is set forth most clearly in the preface to his *Theodicée* (1710). He declares that solid piety, *i. e.* light and virtue, has never been the possession of the many. For most people formalities take its place, either of thought or action (*i. e.* dogmas and ceremonies). These are praiseworthy if they serve as a hedge for the divine law, to keep off evil, accustom men to good, and render virtue familiar. This was the object of Moses, and other sage legislators, and above all of Jesus Christ, divine founder of the most enlightened religion (*divin fondateur de la religion la plus pure et la plus éclairée*).

The pagans who filled the earth before Christ came had only a single kind of formalities, *i. e.* ceremonies. The Hebrews alone had "public dogmas of their religion." They spoke in a very worthy way of the "sovereign substance," and one is surprised to find the inhabitants of a little canton more enlightened than the rest of mankind. Other wise men may have said the same things, but they did not succeed in gaining a following, or in making their doctrine a law. Moses, to be sure, did not enter the doctrine of immortality among his laws. It was in accord with his sentiments; it was taught from mouth to mouth (*de main en main*) but it did not become authorized in a popular manner till Jesus Christ came. He lifted the veil, and without force at His back, taught with all the authority of a lawgiver that immortal souls pass into another life where they receive the reward of their acts. . . . Thus Christ, drawing the full consequences from Moses' teaching, succeeded in making natural religion a law, and giving it all the authority of a public dogma. He alone did what the philosophers had tried in vain to do, and with the triumph of Christianity, the religion of the wise became the religion of the masses.

"Tractatus Theologico-Politicus,"¹ treats of religion as

jectively in the natural moral law, and subjectively in a submission to it that is founded upon conviction" (Pünjer, p. 343).

Thomas Morgan (d. 1743) takes the position that Christianity contains nothing essentially new. He gives us a good deal of criticism of the New Testament. Christ is the best teacher of natural religion, and for that reason, and that alone, we receive Him.

Among the many answers to the deistic position we may note that of Jeffery (*Christianity, the Perfection of All Religion, Natural and Revealed*, London, 1728); Conybeare (*Defence of Revealed Religion*, 1732), in which he criticizes Tindal for failing to distinguish between the phrases, Law of Nature, and Religion of Nature; and especially Bishop Butler, in his famous *Analogy* (1736). He sees in Christianity the confirmation of natural religion, and in addition the statement of certain further truths, not discoverable by reason, *e. g.* the doctrines of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, as the second and third persons of the Trinity.

Period III.

The most important representative of this period is David Hume (1711-1776). In his *Natural History of Religion*, he attributes the origin of religion to natural causes. He regards polytheism as the original form, from which the later monotheism was derived. The latter he criticizes unfavorably, specially because of its attitude toward toleration. He compares the several historic religions and discusses their attitude toward courage, reason, doubt, etc. There is, however, no specific criticism, and no attempt to distinguish true Christianity from its later or spurious forms. His opinion may perhaps be inferred from the sentence at the close of his essay on miracles, in which he says that "even at this day, it (*i. e.* Christianity) cannot be believed by a reasonable person without (a miracle)."

On deism, in addition to the works already referred to, the reader may consult John Hunt's *Religious Thought in England from the Reformation to the end of the Last Century*, 3 vols. London, 1870 sq. A full bibliography of the deistic literature, in chronological arrangement, is given by E. H. Gillett, in his *God in Human Thought* (New York, 1874, 2 vols.).

¹ Written 1656-1661, published 1670. Spinoza here distinguishes between philosophy and religion. The former has to do with knowledge, the second with obedience. Content of the Scriptures, Old and New alike, is the command of obedience, and the religious value of all dogmas is to be tested by their ability to promote this virtue.

Beside the revelation vouchsafed to the Jewish prophets, Spinoza recog-

a matter of precepts and doctrines, a law promulgated by some authorized teacher, to be observed by each individual as best he may. The remarkable thing about Kant is not that he should have failed to understand the mystic side of Christianity, but that, in such an age, he should have thought the doctrines which express this worthy of serious consideration at all.

From the highly abstract teaching of the philosopher of Königsberg to the sober common sense of Locke is a long step. An *a priori* construction of Christianity is the last thing in the mind of this practical English gentleman. Finding men about him disputing as to the nature of Christianity, and reaching conclusions diametrically opposed to one another, he betakes himself

nizes prophets among the heathen. A still higher degree of revelation was communicated to Christ, in whom we may say that the wisdom of God has assumed human nature. Yet although Spinoza thus "puts Christ far above the Jewish prophets, he recognizes no material difference between the revelation of the Old Testament and that of the New. The doctrine is the same; only the prophets preached religion before the coming of Christ as the law of their country and by virtue of the covenant concluded in the time of Moses: whereas the apostles, after the appearing of Christ, preached the very same religion as a universal law, and by virtue of the sufferings of Christ" (Pünjer, p. 416). Cf. *Tract. Theol. Polit.* chap. xi. p. 134, "Nam hi non vocati sunt ut omnibus nationibus praedicarent et prophetarent, sed quibusdam tantum peculiaribus . . . At Apostoli vocati sunt, ut omnibus absolute praedicarent omnesque ad religionem converterent." Also chap. xii. p. 142 (Both references are to Ginsberg's ed. Leipzig, 1877). "Deinde hinc etiam scire possumus, cur Biblia in libros Veteris et Novi Testamenti dividantur: videlicet quia ante adventum Christi Prophetæ religionem prædicare solebant, tanquam legem Patriæ et ex vi pacti tempore Mosis initi; post adventum autem Christi eandem tanquam legem Catholicam et ex sola vi passionis Christi omnibus prædicaverunt Apostoli: at non quod doctrina diversi sint, nec quod tanquam syngrapha foederis scripti fuerint, nec denique quod religio catholica, quæ maxime naturalis est, nova esset, nisi respectu hominum, qui eam non noverant."

to the Scriptures to find out the facts. He takes his departure from the fall of Adam, since "to understand what we are restored to by Jesus Christ, we must consider what the Scriptures show we lost by Adam." "This," he continues, "I thought worthy of a diligent and unbiassed search: since I found the two extremes that men run into on this point, either on the one hand shook the foundations of all religion, or, on the other, made Christianity almost nothing: for while some men would have all Adam's posterity doomed to eternal, infinite punishment, for the transgression of Adam, whom millions had never heard of, and no one had authorized to transact for him or be his representative; this seemed to others so little consistent with the justice or goodness of the great and infinite God, that they thought there was no redemption necessary, and consequently, that there was none . . . and so made Jesus Christ nothing but the restorer and preacher of pure natural religion: thereby doing violence to the whole tenour of the New Testament."¹ Here we have a clear recognition of our question, What is the element which is distinctive of Christianity as a religion? To this Locke answers without hesitation, It is the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah.² This is the one thing which

¹ P. 4, Works, Vol. VII. (London, 1812).

² P. 112. "This is the law of that Kingdom, as well as for all mankind; and that law, by which all men shall be judged at the last day. Only those who have believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and have taken Him to be their King, with a sincere endeavor after righteousness, in obeying His law, shall have their past sins not imputed unto them, and shall have that faith taken instead of obedience." See also p. 113, "The faith required was, to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, the Anointed; who had been promised by God to the world;" p. 17, and especially p. 102.

differentiates Christians and Jews, and makes the former adherents of a new religion. Other doctrines are taught in the Scripture (such, for example, as the Trinity), and may belong to historic Christianity in the larger sense. Locke will not deny their truth or their importance in their place. But they are not necessary to the existence of Christianity. A man may doubt them and still be a Christian.¹ The Messiahship of Jesus alone is the *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae* for Christianity.²

"For that this (*i. e.* the Messiahship of Jesus) is the sole doctrine pressed and required to be believed in the whole tenour of our Saviour's and His Apostles' preaching, we have showed through the whole history of the evangelists and the Acts. . . . This was the only gospel article of faith which was preached to them." To be sure, this is not a substitute for the moral law (p. 122), since the acceptance of Christ as Messiah means obedience to His requirements, which include the moral law. "Faith and repentance, *i. e.* believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and a good life," go together, as "the indispensable conditions of the New Covenant, to be performed by all those who would obtain eternal life" (p. 105).

¹ "There be many truths in the Bible, which a good Christian may be wholly ignorant of, and so not believe; which, perhaps, some lay great stress on, and call fundamental articles, because they are the distinguishing points of their communion" (p. 152). Cf. p. 154, where he denies that the epistles are the best place to go, to discover essential Christianity. He does not deny "but the great doctrines of the Christian faith are dropt here and there, and scattered up and down in them;" but they are "mixed with other truths." We shall find the "great and necessary points best, in the preaching of our Saviour and His Apostles, to those who were yet strangers and ignorant of the faith."

² The idea that the acceptance of Christ as Messiah is the one necessary article of Christian faith had already been anticipated by Hobbes in his *Leviathan*. Cf. p. 590, "The *unum necessarium*, only article of faith, which the Scripture maketh simply necessary to salvation, is this, that Jesus is the Christ." Locke himself, however, seems to have reached his own position independently. He expressly states (*Vindication*, p. 187) that while at first his view "seemed mightily to satisfy my mind, in the reasonableness and plainness of this doctrine," yet "the general silence I had in

If you ask Locke further why this should be, he cannot answer. It is for God to prescribe, and for us to obey. It is enough that He has clearly revealed to us that this is His requirement.¹ Those who have not received the Christian revelation, God will judge justly according to the light they had.² But for us, who have

my little reading met with, concerning any such thing, awed me with the apprehension of singularity." However on "going on in the gospel history, the whole tenour of it made it so clear and visible, that I more wondered that everybody did not see and embrace it, than that I should assent to what was so plainly laid down, and so frequently inculcated in holy writ, though systems of divinity said nothing of it." Certainly Locke's statement is much fuller and abler than anything we find in Hobbes.

It is interesting to compare with this view of Locke, that the acceptance of Jesus' Messiahship is the fundamental Christian doctrine, Kant's reference to the clever device of the first preachers of Christianity, in including in their articles of faith, as part of universal religion, everywhere and always valid, the provision "that every Christian must become a Jew whose Messiah had come" (*Religion*, p. 198 [H. VI. p. 346]).

¹ To the objection, "That to believe only that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah is but an historical, and not a justifying or saving faith," he answers, "That I allow to the makers of systems and their followers to invent and use what distinctions they please and to call things by what names they think fit; but I cannot allow to them or to any man an authority to make a religion for me, or to alter that which God hath revealed" (p. 101).

Cf. p. 134, "It is enough to justify the fitness of anything to be done by resolving it into the 'wisdom of God,' who has done it: though our short views and narrow understandings may utterly incapacitate us to see that wisdom, and to judge rightly of it."

² P. 132. "To this I answer: that God will require of every man, 'according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.' . . . But though there be many, who being strangers to the commonwealth of Israel were also strangers to the oracles of God, committed to that people; many to whom the promise of the Messiah never came, and so were never in a capacity to believe or reject that revelation; yet God had by the light of reason revealed to all mankind, who would make use of that light, that He was good and merciful. The same spark of the divine nature and knowledge in man, which, making him a man, showed him the law he was under, as a man; showed him also the way of aton-

the higher revelation, He requires obedience to its new command. Here we see Locke unable to emancipate himself from the external and arbitrary conceptions of his time. God is a sovereign, whose commands we question at our peril, and Christianity a law which He has given us to obey. Yet, on the question why the religion of Israel was not sufficient, he has a number of suggestions to make.¹ Judaism was a national religion. Jesus broke down the middle wall of partition and introduced the universal religion. He brought to mankind at large a clear knowledge of God and of their duty. He reformed and simplified worship, brought encouragement to virtue through the hope of immortality, and gave promise of assistance through the Holy Spirit. Locke is ready to grant you that individual philosophers saw portions of truth, and that mankind ought to have perceived it all.² But as a matter of fact they did not, and even on the plane of ethics alone no such body of teaching existed as was brought into the world by Christ.³

ing the merciful, kind, compassionate Author and Father of him and his being, when he had transgressed that law."

¹ P. 137. "If it be asked, whether the revelation to the patriarchs by Moses did not teach this, and why that was not enough," etc.

² P. 135. "The rational and thinking part of mankind, it is true, when they sought after Him, they found the one supreme, invisible God; but if they acknowledged and worshipped Him, it was only in their own minds. They kept this truth locked up in their own breasts as a secret, nor ever durst venture it amongst the people." See also p. 143. "If any one shall think to excuse human nature, by laying blame on men's negligence, that they did not carry morality to a higher pitch, . . . he helps not the matter. Be the cause what it will, our Saviour found mankind under a corruption of manners and principles, which ages after ages had prevailed, and must be confessed, was not in a way or tendency to be mended."

³ "Such a (law of morality) as this, out of the New Testament, I

Christianity, then, to Locke, consists in the recognition of the authority of Christ as God's representative and Messiah, and the belief and practice of the doctrines and precepts which He has prescribed. About this original core, other doctrines have grown up, such as the Trinity, which also belong to Christianity, but are not to be regarded as of its essence, or as necessary to salvation.¹

In Lessing we meet a curious combination of the old and the new. So far as his positive conception of Christianity is concerned, it is as arbitrary and unhistorical as that of Kant himself. Jesus Christ is the

think the world never had, nor can any one say, is anywhere else to be found" (p. 143).

¹ Locke sums up his view most fully on p. 157. "God, out of the infiniteness of His mercy, has dealt with man as a compassionate and tender Father. He gave him reason, and with it a law: that could not be otherwise than what reason should dictate: unless we should think, that a reasonable creature should have an unreasonable law. But, considering the frailty of man, apt to run into corruption and misery, He promised a Deliverer, whom in His good time He sent; and then declared to all mankind, that whoever would believe Him to be the Saviour promised, and take Him now raised from the dead and constituted the Lord and Judge of all men, to be their King and Ruler, should be saved. This is a plain, intelligible proposition; and the all-merciful God seems herein to have consulted the poor of this world, and the bulk of mankind. These are articles that the labouring and illiterate man can comprehend. This is a religion suited to vulgar capacities; and the state of mankind in this world, destined to labour and travail. The writers and wranglers in religion fill it with niceties, and dress it up with notions, which they make necessary and fundamental parts of it; as if there were no way into the church, but through the academy or lyceum. . . . That the poor had the gospel preached to them Christ makes a mark, as well as business of His mission (Matt. xi. 5). And if the poor have the gospel preached to them, it was without doubt such a gospel as the poor could understand, plain and intelligible; and so it was, as we have seen, in the preachings of Christ and His Apostles."

teacher who adds to the great doctrine of the unity of God which Moses had taught, the new dogma of immortality, and so gives men a higher motive for right conduct than they had previously had.¹ This is in substance the view already set forth by Leibnitz in his *Theodicée* more than eighty years before. But this abstract and inadequate conception is set in the framework of a great idea. It is that of the divine education of the human race. It is not that Christ has reasserted an unchanging religion of nature, but that He has led mankind one step higher in their approach to that "new eternal Gospel which is promised us . . . in the New Testament itself."² In God's great schoolbook of time, each of the historic religions is a lesson which God has given humanity to learn.³ None of them is final. As

¹ § 58. "Und so ward Christus der erste zuverlässige, praktische Lehrer der Unsterblichkeit der Seele."

² § 86. "Sie wird gewiss kommen, die Zeit eines neuen, ewigen Evangeliums, die uns selbst in den Elementarbüchern des Neuen Bundes versprochen wird."

³ As a matter of fact, Lessing applies this conception only to Judaism and Christianity, which alone he regards as revealed religions in the special sense. The object of revelation is not to impart any truth which is above the reach of the natural reason, but "simply to teach man what he could have learned for himself, only more quickly and with less effort." It may happen that even without revelation man may anticipate much divine truth, as bright children pick up knowledge without schooling. But on the whole the progress of the race under revelation is more sure, and in time the books which record God's teaching of His chosen few become the schoolbooks of the entire race. The only mistake lies in being satisfied with elementary teaching instead of pressing on to new and higher truth. Even the New Testament is not final (§ 67). The mysterious doctrines which it contains (Trinity, original sin, atonement) are some day to give place to the clearer, simpler statements, to which they were designed to lead (§ 76). Even immortality itself will some day come to be independent of its foundation in the New Testament (§ 72).

Judaism has been superseded by Christianity, so Christianity in turn will give place to the new religion that shall be. With this conception of humanity as progressing through higher and ever higher stages to a distant goal, we find ourselves stepping out of the abstract world of the eighteenth century into the new historical world of the nineteenth.

Turning back for a moment upon the threshold to gain a bird's-eye view of the country we are leaving, three characteristics impress themselves upon our attention: first, the abstractness of the eighteenth century world; secondly, its individualism; thirdly, its rationalism.

1. It is characteristic of almost all the writers whom we have studied that they come to Christianity with their own pre-conceived notions, ready to find in it so much as may agree with their own views and no more. This is true of both sides, the defenders of traditional Christianity and its opponents. In this Kant is typical. We find little effort really to understand Christianity as an objective phenomenon presented in history, or sympathetically to live oneself into its life and spirit, in order to learn, if possible, the secret of its power. Locke deserves honorable mention, for his effort to gain an objective and unprejudiced opinion

Thus we see that in spite of his acceptance of the fact of revelation, to Lessing, no less than to his contemporaries, the only true religion is natural religion, and the position of Nathan, to whom all the historic religions are simply forms of the one universal religion of humanity, becomes easily intelligible.

On Lessing's relation to Christianity, cf. Bertheau, in Herzog, *Real Encyklopädie*,² VIII. p. 608 sq.; Dorner, *Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie* (1867), p. 721 sq.; Pünjer, *op. cit.* p. 564 sq.

of Christianity, but he, too, is unable to lift himself above the controlling ideas of his age.¹ Even in those, like Lessing and Herder, in whom we feel the stirring of a better day, we find the old abstract ideas too tenacious to make their contributions really fruitful for the understanding of historic Christianity.

2. Of the individualism of the eighteenth century we have more than once spoken. Nowhere do we find any appreciation of the social aspects of the Christian Gospel. Here again Kant is typical. To one who is able to give a purely individualistic interpretation to such a doctrine as original sin, the more profound aspects of Christianity must remain a sealed book. The brotherhood, both in sin and in salvation, which plays so large a rôle in historic Christianity, is simply such as results from the aggregation of isolated individuals, each complete in himself. Christ is Example, Teacher, Master. But of mediation in any deeper sense there is little understanding. Even to those whose theology includes such conceptions as incarnation and atonement, they are rather additional doctrines to be believed on authority, than integral elements in a consistent theological scheme. To thinkers of all schools, orthodox and rationalist alike, Christianity is law, not Gospel, and the only question in dispute is as to how much that law contains.

3. We have already anticipated the third feature in the eighteenth century world, its rationalism. We use the word here in the narrow technical sense, to express that view of religion which conceives of it

¹ See note 1, p. 130.

primarily as a system of doctrines or precepts, and has no adequate appreciation of its experimental elements. Kant is willing to admit that the supernatural may exist. But the man who claims to have first-hand knowledge of it may be set down as either deceiver or deceived.¹ That sense of immediate contact with the divine which has been characteristic of the great religious personalities in all ages is conspicuous by its absence. The being of God is established by argument of various kinds. Kant believes in Him because His existence is necessary to the integrity of his ethical system. The apologists, on the other hand, rely on the evidence of miracle or prophecy. But neither the one nor the other claims to know God by experience. Whatever may be His nature, He is not in the world but outside of it; a noumenon, a postulate, a hypothesis, a Providence — anything but the One in whom we live and move and have our being. This is the background which we must have constantly before us if we would appreciate the new epoch which was dawning. Into this cold, abstract, rationalistic world came Schleiermacher, with his gospel of the sovereignty of the religious feeling.

¹ *Religion*, p. 229 [H. VI. pp. 376, 377]. "Der Begriff eines übernatürlichen Beitritts zu unserem moralischen, obzwar mangelhaften Vermögen . . . ist transcendent und eine blosser Idee von deren Realität uns keine Erfahrung versichern kann. . . . Allein die Unmöglichkeit davon . . . lässt sich doch eben auch nicht beweisen."

CHAPTER V

THE DEFINITION OF SCHLEIERMACHER ¹

1. *Life and Theological Activity.*

THE father of modern scientific theology is Frederick Daniel Ernest Schleiermacher. Born in 1768 in Bres-

¹ The literature on Schleiermacher is so voluminous that it is possible to mention only a few of the more important and helpful works. For the older bibliography the reader may be referred to the article by Gass, in Herzog, *Real Encyklopädie*,² Vol. XIII. p. 570 sq. Much useful information is also contained in the bibliographical notes of Bleek's *Grundlagen der Christologie Schleiermachers* (Freiburg, 1898).

For the life of Schleiermacher, cf. Dilthey, *Schleiermachers Leben*, Vol. I. Berlin, 1870. The autobiography and letters of Schleiermacher have been published in four volumes under the title, *Aus Schleiermachers Leben* (Berlin, 1858); also translated by Frederica Rowan, under the title, *The Life of Schleiermacher, as unfolded in his autobiography and letters* (London, 2 vols. 1860, quoted in what follows as Rowan). His correspondence with Gass has been separately edited (*Briefwechsel mit J. Chr. Gass*, Berlin, 1852). Special studies have been published, among others, by Baur (*Studien und Kritiken*, 1859, Heft 3 und 4); Auberlen (*Schleiermacher: Ein Charakterbild*, Basel, 1859); Kosack (*Schleiermachers Jugendleben*, Elberfeld, 1861); Baxman (*Friedrich Schleiermacher: Sein Leben und sein Wirken*, Elberfeld, 1868); Schenkel (*Friedrich Schleiermacher: Ein Lebens und Charakterbild*, Elberfeld, 1868). The English reader may also find brief accounts in the introduction to the translation of the *Reden* by J. Oman (London, 1893) and of the *Kurze Darstellung*, by Farrer (Edinburgh, 1850), to which is prefixed a translation of Lücke's *Reminiscences of Schleiermacher*.

Among the older works, those of Baur (*Die christliche Gnosis*, Tübingen, 1835, pp. 626-668); Schmid (*Ueber Schleiermachers Glaubenslehre*, Leipzig, 1835), Rosenkranz (*Kritik der schleiermacherschen Glaubenslehre*, Königsberg, 1836), Gess (*Uebersicht über das theologische System Dr. Fr.*

lau, adding to the early training of the Moravian schools of Niesky and Barby the scientific education of the University of Halle, filling successively positions of

Schleiermacher, und über die Beurtheilungen, welche dasselbe . . . erhalten hat, 2d edition, Reutlingen, 1837); Strauss (*Schleiermacher und Daub*, in *Charakteristiken und Kritiken*, Leipzig, 1839); and Schaller (*Vorlesungen über Schleiermacher*, Halle, 1844) will still be found serviceable.

Special monographs by Fischer (*Die schleiermachersche Trennung der Theologie von der Philosophie vgl. mit der spinozischen*, in *Stud. und Krit.* 1848, p. 632 sq.); Sigwart (*Schleiermachers Erkenntnistheorie und ihre Bedeutung für die Glaubenslehre*, in *Jahr. für deut. Theol.* Vol. II. Heft 2) and Zeller (*Erinnerung an Schleiermachers Lehre von der Persönlichkeit Gottes*, in *Theol. Jahrbücher*, 1842, Heft 2).

Among more recent works we may mention in the order of their appearance :

1. A. Ritschl, *Schleiermachers Reden über die Religion, und ihre Nachwirkungen auf die evangelische Kirche Deutschlands*, Bonn, 1874.

2. Lipsius, *Schleiermachers Reden*, in *Jahr. für prot. Theol.* 1875; *Schleiermacher und die Romantik*, "Im neuen Reich," 1876, I. No. 19.

3. Bender, *Schleiermachers Theologie, mit ihren philosophischen Grundlagen dargestellt*, Nördlingen, 1876.

4. O. Ritschl, *Schleiermachers Stellung zum Christentum in seinen Reden über die Religion*, Gotha, 1888. Cf. also by the same, *Schleiermachers Theorie von der Frömmigkeit* in *Theol. Stud. B. Weiss gewidmet*, Göttingen, 1897.

5. Kalthoff, *Schleiermachers Vermächtnis an unsere Zeit*, Braunschweig, 1896.

6. Bleek, *Die Grundlagen der Christologie Schleiermachers*, Freiburg, 1898.

7. M. Fischer, *Schleiermacher : Zum hundertjährigen Gedächtnis der Reden*, Berlin, 1899.

8. Huber, *Die Entwicklung des Religionsbegriffs von Schleiermacher* (in *Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und der Kirche*, hrg. von Bonwetsch und Seeberg, VII. 3), Leipzig, 1901.

Much information may also be gained from the relevant sections of the general works of Lichtenberger (*Histoire des Idées religieuses en Allemagne*, II. p. 65 sq.); Gass, (*Geschichte der prot. Dogmatik*, IV. p. 434 sq.); Ritschl (*Recht. und Vers.* I. p. 484); Pfleiderer (*Development of Theology*, p. 44 sq. and especially p. 103 sq.); Frank (*Geschichte und Kritik der neueren Theologie*, p. 54 sq.) and Kattenbusch (*Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl*, Giessen, 1893).

commanding influence as preacher and professor, dying, at last, in 1834, as professor of theology in Berlin, his life was one of unusual breadth and variety of influence. A man of encyclopædic learning,¹ equally at home in history, classics, philosophy, ethics, and theology, he combined with a dialectic genius rare in any age, a religious nature of unusual depth and fervor. From the devout brethren who had been his earliest teachers he had learned to think of religion as a matter of experience, rather than of dogma or of rite, and to distinguish between theology as theory and the life which it seeks to explain. Equally sensitive to influences of the head and heart, no man was ever better furnished by nature to apprehend the problem we have been discussing, or to contribute to its solution.

Schleiermacher's father, a clergyman of the Reformed church, was chaplain of a Silesian regiment. In his earlier years he had been infected by the prevailing rationalism, but later came under the influence of the Moravian brethren, to whose instruction he committed his son, sending him in 1783 to school at Niesky, and two years later to the gymnasium at Barby. Schleiermacher himself was a delicate child. During his residence at Barby, he fell into religious doubts as to the doctrines of the atonement and of eternal punishment.² These became so serious as to lead to his withdrawal in 1787, in spite of his father's protests, to the Univer-

¹ In one of his letters he expresses the wish "some day to write a book about everything," but admits that he shall probably have to postpone this a good many years, as he shall require a long time to gather his materials (Rowan, Vol. I, p. 209.).

² Compare his letter to his father, Jan. 21, 1787, Rowan, I. p. 47.

sity of Halle, where he lived with his uncle, Stubenrauch. Here he made a special study of philosophy, and laid the foundations of that extraordinary learning for which he later became famous. After leaving Halle, he spent a year with his uncle at Drossen in Neumark. He was licensed in 1790, and became tutor in the family of Count Dohna of Schlobitten in Prussia, where he spent three years. In 1794, after half a year as member of Gedike's Seminary in Berlin, and teacher in the orphanage of Kornmesser, he was ordained, and became an assistant of Pastor Schumann of Landsberg. In 1796, he was appointed preacher at the Charity Institute at Berlin. Here he came under the influence of Schlegel, and of Dorothea Veit, and through them entered the social and artistic circles of Berlin, and became a part of the romantic movement which was then exercising so potent an influence upon the younger spirits. In this period falls his commentary on "Lucinde,"¹ and his unfortunate love affair with Eleanore Grünow. But he had time for deeper interests as well. In 1799 appeared his "Reden über die Religion"; in 1800, the "Monologen." In 1802 he removed from Berlin to Stolpe, where he became court preacher. Here he worked on a translation of Plato, and on an ethical work.² In 1804, he became professor extraordinary at Halle. He returned to Berlin in 1807, to become in the following year preacher at the *Dreifaltigkeits-*

¹ *Lucinde* was a novel, written by Schlegel, in which he allowed himself a freedom of expression which made him a subject of just criticism. Schleiermacher's commentary was written to call attention to the deeper purpose of his friend's book.

² *Kritik aller bisherigen Sittenlehre*, 1806.

kirche. Soon after he married Henriette von Willich, the widow of one of his former friends. In 1810, he became professor at the University of Berlin; in 1814, secretary of the Academy of Sciences. Then followed years full of activity in the university, in public life, and in the church, as well as in literary and intellectual work. He died on the 12th of February, 1834.

The theological activity of Schleiermacher centres about two questions: "What is Religion?" and "What is Christianity?" To the first he addresses himself in the "*Reden*" (1799).¹ The second is the theme of his "*Glaubenslehre*" (1821).² A word as to the first will prepare us to appreciate the significance of the second.³

¹ "*Reden über die Religion an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*." First edition, 1799; reprinted with an introduction by Otto, Göttingen, 1899; second edition, considerably revised, 1806. A third edition with explanatory notes was issued immediately after the appearance of the *Glaubenslehre*, 1821. Fourth edition, practically unchanged, 1831 (reprint with introduction by Schwarz, 2d ed. Leipzig, 1880). A critical edition, comparing the variations of the different editions, was issued by Pünjer in 1879. The references which follow are to Schwarz's edition. A translation of the third edition has been made by John Oman, London, 1893. Unless otherwise stated, the references in what follows are given to this translation.

² "*Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt*" (1821; second edition, 1830, 1831). The quotations in the following are from the Berlin edition of 1884, in two volumes.

Apart from the *Glaubenslehre* and the *Reden*, the most important sources for Schleiermacher's view of Christianity are his Sermons (1801), the *Weihnachtsfeier* (1806), a dialogue on the significance of Christmas, in which his sense of the importance of Christianity as a historic religion clearly appears, and especially his *Kurze Darstellung des theologischen Studiums* (1811, 2d ed., with notes, Berlin, 1830. Eng. tr. by Farrer, Edinburgh, 1850).

³ The question as to the relation of the *Reden* to the *Glaubenslehre* has been much discussed. Most scholars find a marked difference of

2. *Schleiermacher's View of Religion.*

The boyhood of Schleiermacher was passed in a period of shallow rationalism. The elaborate system-building

standpoint, but as to its significance they are not agreed. Otto Ritschl (*Schleiermachers Stellung zum Christentum in seinen Reden über die Religion. Ein Beitrag zur Ehrenrettung Schleiermachers*, Gotha, 1878, chap. i.) regards the apparent difference of view as due to the apologetic purpose of the *Reden*, the author striving as far as possible to put himself in the position of the "cultured despisers" whom he seeks to win over. The exoteric character of the speeches, so he maintains, forbids us to argue as to Schleiermacher's real views. In support of this position it may be urged that the sermons which Schleiermacher published in 1801 show a much more positive view of Christianity than would appear from the *Reden*. To the same effect might be cited Schleiermacher's letter to Jacobi, written much later (Rowan, II. p. 280 *sq.*), in which he says of himself that "in point of feeling I am religious and a Christian, and have entirely renounced heathenism, or, rather, I have never possessed any." Strauss, on the other hand (*Charakteristiken und Kritiken*, 1839, p. 23), emphasizes the contrast between the two works. According to his opinion, the *Reden* were written "out of the consciousness of one who, so far as his feeling and thought are concerned, had yet by no means definitely taken up his abode within the Christian religion and the church." In the *Glaubenslehre*, we have the definite abandonment of the earlier, freer position of the *Reden* in the interests of a more narrow conventional orthodoxy. To Strauss there is something extremely unpleasant in the spectacle of the aged Schleiermacher, in his rôle of censor, criticizing the faults of his own theological youth.

The truth would seem to lie midway between the two views. Some change can hardly be denied. A comparison of the first and second editions of the *Reden* shows a decided advance in the direction of the later positions. Comparing the later edition with the *Glaubenslehre*, as Lipsius has done in his careful study of the *Reden* in the *Jahr. für prot. Theol.* for 1875 (p. 314), we find substantial agreement. But even in the first edition we find in germ most of the points of view which come to expression in the *Glaubenslehre*. Schleiermacher himself maintains that while in form the *Reden* and the *Glaubenslehre* are very different and their points of departure lie far apart, yet in content they are entirely consistent (*doch ihrem Inhalt nach vollkommen ineinander mögen auflösen können*), *Reden*, II. note 5, Eng. tr. p. 105. In the present discussion we shall consider the view of religion to which Schleiermacher finally came, with-

of the later Protestantism had issued in a narrow and intolerant dogmatism from which thoughtful men reacted more and more. Unable to accept theological propositions equally repugnant to reason and to conscience, they ended by denying the reality of the religious life which they sought to express. Schleiermacher, in a passage of rare eloquence and pathos, tells us that in his day religion had utterly ceased even to interest educated men. So far had it passed out of the horizon of their thought, that it was not considered worth while even to deny it. And the only feeling upon which the Christian apologist, seeking to find a point of contact on which to base his appeal, could lay hold, was men's contempt.¹ In such an age, and before such an audience, Schleiermacher stands forth as the prophet of the abiding worth of religion.

The discourses in which Schleiermacher has expressed his view of religion are in no sense systematic treatises. They are songs rather than arguments, prose poems, glowing with all the enthusiasm of a new discovery, and appealing to men with the force which always attaches to personal conviction. From the beginning to the end but a single note is struck, religion as the

out endeavoring to trace its development in detail. The reader who desires to follow the subject farther is referred to the careful collection of material in Huber, *Die Entwicklung des Religionsbegriffs bei Schleiermacher*, (in *Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und der Kirche*, hrg. von Bonwetsch und Seeberg, Vol. VII.) Leipzig, 1901.

¹ *Reden*, Schwarz's ed. p. 12, Eng. tr. p. 12.

With this may be compared the celebrated passage in the introduction to Bishop Butler's *Analogy* (1736). "It has come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is, now at length, discovered to be fictitious."

immediate contact of the soul with God. What you call religion, he cries to his hearers, is not really such. The dogmas and rites with which you identify it are only garments in which for the time it has chanced to clothe itself, but which may be thrown aside without affecting its nature.¹ Religion is neither doctrine nor ceremony. Religion is experience. It has its home below thought, even below conscience, in the emotional nature of man.² Religion is the sense of the infinite in the finite.³ It is the feeling of absolute dependence.⁴

¹ Cf. *Reden*, p. 14, Eng. tr. p. 14. "You are doubtless acquainted with the histories of human follies, and have reviewed the various structures of religious doctrine, from the senseless fables of wanton peoples to the most refined deism, from the rude superstition of human sacrifice to the ill-put-together fragments of metaphysics and ethics, now called purified Christianity, and you have found them all without rhyme or reason. I am far from wishing to contradict you."

² This thought is fully developed in the second discourse on the nature of religion, where Schleiermacher contrasts religion with thought and action, as feeling. Compare the celebrated passage descriptive of the rise of consciousness, that fleeting moment, gone almost before it has come, when subject becomes one with object, individual with the whole, in the unity of feeling, etc.; "Wenn ich ihn wenigstens vergleichen dürfte," etc., "Did I venture to compare it" (p. 40, Eng. tr. p. 43).

³ P. 34, Eng. tr. p. 36. "The contemplation of the pious is the immediate consciousness of the universal existence of all finite things in and through the Infinite, and of all temporal things in and through the Eternal. Religion is to seek this and find it in all that lives and moves, in all growth and change, in all doing and suffering. It is to have life and to know life in immediate feeling, only as such an existence in the Infinite and Eternal."

⁴ Cf. *Glaubenslehre*, § 4, p. 14. "Das gemeinsame aller noch so verschiedenen Aeusserungen der Frömmigkeit, wodurch diese sich zugleich von allen andern Gefühlen unterscheiden, also das sich selbst gleiche Wesen der Frömmigkeit ist dieses, dass wir uns unsrer selbst als schlechthin abhängig, oder, was dasselbe sagen will, als in Beziehung mit Gott bewusst sind." The identification of the feeling of absolute dependence with the consciousness of relation to God appears here much more clearly

There are passages in the "Reden" where the stress upon feeling is carried to such an extent that it seems to exclude religion from all contact with practical life.¹ But a more careful reading shows that this is not Schleiermacher's true thought. The separation of feeling from thought and action is possible only logically.² Practically they are inseparably connected. "To wish to have true science or true practice without religion," he exclaims, "or to imagine it possessed, is obstinate, arrogant delusion and culpable error. . . . What is all science, if not the existence of things in you, in your reason? What is all art and culture if not your existence in the things to which you give measure, form, and order? And how can both come to life in you except in so far as there lives immediately in you

than in the *Reden*. In the first edition of the latter we find such expressions as "the heavenly spark which is produced when a holy soul is stirred by the Universe." Religion "is reverent attention and submission, in childlike passivity, to be stirred and filled by the Universe's immediate influences" (quoted in Oman's tr. pp. 276, 277). In later editions God is frequently substituted for Universe. In a note to the third edition (p. 23, Eng. tr. p. 24), Schleiermacher repels the charge of Pantheism directed against his early utterances, and explains the reference to the Universe from the fact that it is, "when a man surrenders himself to the Universe" that those "pious emotions" rise which "pass immediately into religious ideas and views, and into a temperament of surrender to God." (Cf. the fuller note, p. 93, Eng. tr. p. 103; also Lipsius, *op. cit.* p. 292 sq.).

¹ *E. g.* pp. 52, 53, Eng. tr. p. 57, "Lest you should think that I am merely quibbling, consider that religion by itself does not urge men to activity at all;" p. 42, Eng. tr. p. 45, "This (*i. e.* the realm of feeling) is the peculiar sphere which I would assign to religion." Cf. also the passage, p. 33, Eng. tr. p. 35, beginning, "Um euch also ihren ursprünglichen," etc., the true sense of which is, however, obscured in the translation by the unhappy rendering of the "vorläufig" of the original by "once for all."

² *Reden*, p. 36, Eng. tr. p. 39.

the eternal unity of Reason and Nature, the universal existence of all finite things in the Infinite?"¹

For it must never be forgotten that the religious feeling of which Schleiermacher makes so much is not the mystic sense of absorption in the Infinite. On the contrary, it takes for granted the separate existence of the individual, and realizes itself through the contact of the self with the infinite variety of the world.² The Infinite of which we are conscious is not a vague unconditioned, but the infinity of existence in general, as it realizes itself through the concrete world of experience with its endless richness and variety.³ It is the discovery of the Infinite in the very midst of the finite, as that on which it depends, and in which it exists, which makes out the essence of the religious life.⁴

This strong sense of individuality gives to Schleiermacher's thought its wonderful freshness and attractiveness. The religious experience, while at bottom fundamentally the same (*i. e.* as consciousness of

¹ *Ibid.* p. 37.

² Cf. especially pp. 5-8, Eng. tr. pp. 3-7 of the *Reden*, where the ideal religious leader is represented as the man who unites in himself in supreme degree the two inherent tendencies of human nature, the self-assertive and the dependent.

³ Cf. *Reden*, note, p. 93, Eng. tr. p. 103. We cannot be conscious of the Infinite "immediately, and through itself," but only through the finite, as "our tendency to postulate and seek a world leads us from detail and part to the All and the Whole. Hence sense for the Infinite, and the immediate life of the finite in us as it is in the Infinite, are one and the same (So ist demnach Sinn für das Unendliche, und unmittelbares in uns Leben des Endlichen, wie es im Unendlichen ist, eins und dasselbe)."

⁴ Cf. the beautiful description of the origin of religion (p. 58 *sq.*, Eng. tr. p. 63 *sq.*), in which Schleiermacher describes how God is found successively in nature, in man, and in history.

dependence upon the Infinite), realizes itself in many ways, according to the different conditions in which the individual may be placed, and the different ways in which he may conceive his relation to the Infinite. Sometimes this variety is carried to such a point that it seems to destroy all possibility of unity.¹ Thus Schleiermacher repels the singular notion of one true religion with which all others are contrasted as false.² It follows from the idea of religion that it is infinitely various ; “not to be comprehended under one form, but only under the sum-total of all forms.”³ But all the forms, the lower as well as the higher, are alike, in their place, good. So far from being exclusive, “religion is the natural and sworn foe of all narrow-mindedness and of all onesidedness.”⁴

¹ Cf. p. 46, Eng. tr. p. 50. The inner unity of the religious life (diese innere Einheit der Religiosität) “spreads itself out into a great variety of provinces, and again, in each province it contracts itself, and the narrower and smaller the province, the more is necessarily excluded as incompatible, and the more included as characteristic. . . . Religion thus fashions itself with endless variety, down even to the single personality.” Cf. p. 203, Eng. tr. p. 217, “No one will have his own true and right religion, if it is the same for all ;” p. 209, Eng. tr. p. 224, where he urges that the man who does not find himself at home in any existing religion is bound “to produce a new one within himself (eine neue in sich selbst hervorzubringen).”

² P. 49, Eng. tr. p. 53. Cf. p. 203, Eng. tr. p. 217, “You are wrong therefore, with your universal religion that is natural to all.” The same thought recurs in the *Glaubenslehre*, I. p. 39. “Nur dass verträgt sich nicht mit unserm Satz (i. e. von der ausschliessenden Vortrefflichkeit des Christenthums) dass die christliche Frömmigkeit sich wenigstens zu den meisten anderen Gestaltungen verhalten soll, wie die wahre zu den falschen.” Yet cf. the preceding part of the paragraph, and the explanatory note on p. 98, Eng. tr. p. 107, of the *Reden*, which shows the sense in which Schleiermacher wishes his denial to be understood.

³ P. 49, Eng. tr. p. 54.

⁴ P. 51, Eng. tr. p. 56. Cf. p. 232, Eng. tr. p. 251, where he denies that Christianity desires to be the sole and universal religion.

Are we then to conclude that there ought to be as many religions as there are men? In the sense that no individual religious experience can be the perfect reproduction of any other, this is true.¹ But this is only one side of Schleiermacher's thought. Manifold as are the varieties of the religious feeling, they are not arbitrary, but follow certain definite laws.² The individual experiences of men gather themselves into groups according to certain specific principles, and so the positive religions are born.³ Whatever ought to be the case theoretically, practically religion, like every other fundamental human experience, is a social affair and propagates itself through contact.⁴ Thus mediation

¹ Compare p. 210 *sq.*, Eng. tr. p. 225 *sq.*, where Schleiermacher shows that this variety is possible within each historic religion. See also p. 99, Eng. tr. p. 108.

² P. 46, Eng. tr. p. 50. "Religion is certainly a system, if you mean that it is formed according to an inward and necessary connection. . . . Whatever occurs anywhere, whether among many or few, as a peculiar and distinct kind of feeling, is in itself complete, and by its nature necessary." Compare also p. 198, Eng. tr. p. 212.

³ P. 202, Eng. tr. p. 217. "You will then find that the positive religions are just the definite forms in which religion must exhibit itself." Compare p. 49, Eng. tr. p. 53.

It is interesting at this point to contrast Schleiermacher's view of religion with Kant's. To Kant there can be but one (true) religion, which he will construct *a priori*, and which manifests itself more or less perfectly in a variety of different churches. To Schleiermacher, in the ideal, there should be but one church (p. 199, Eng. tr. p. 213), though there may be many religions. The positiveness which Kant regards as a weakness, he sees as the strength of religion (p. 200 *sq.*, Eng. tr. p. 215), and bids his readers join some one of the many historical religions, sure that they will find room within it for the proper play of their own individual feeling. Cf. p. 211, Eng. tr. p. 226.

⁴ *Glaubenslehre*, § 6; also *Reden*, chaps. iii. and iv. *passim*. Compare especially p. 115, Eng. tr. p. 123 (religion as embracing a mastership and a discipleship).

becomes a familiar religious fact.¹ This explains the stress laid in all the great historic religions upon their origin.² If, indeed, the relation of the religions to their founders were but an arbitrary one, based upon adventitious circumstances, and maintaining itself simply through external tradition, it would be a different matter. But this is not the case. At the root of every one of the great religions, there lies a spiritual affinity which was the original bond of union. In the founder or teacher, some one of the possible types of relationship to God for the first time found historic expression,³ and it was this fact which drew to him his disciples, and which, so far as the religion is a living one, still holds them together. Hence in seeking to understand any great religion we must endeavor to discover what was the character of the primitive religious feeling from which it sprang, and what is the relation of this original feeling to its later manifestations.⁴

¹ *Reden*, pp. 7, 8, Eng. tr. pp. 6, 7. Compare also pp. 225, 226, 228-230, Eng. tr. pp. 242, 243, 246-248, especially p. 228, Eng. tr. p. 247, where we read that "all finite things require the mediation of a higher being." See also the definition of Christianity in the *Glaubenslehre*, § 11.

² *Reden*, p. 219, Eng. tr. p. 236, "Religious men are throughout historical." See also p. 218, Eng. tr. p. 234, "If a definite religion may not begin with an original fact, it cannot begin at all."

³ P. 208, Eng. tr. p. 222 sq. "Demnach bleibt, dass ich's kurz sage, kein anderer Weg übrig, wie eine wirklich individuelle [Religion] kann zu Stande gebracht worden sein, als dadurch, dass irgendeines von den grossen Verhältnissen der Menschheit in der Welt und zum höchsten Wesen auf eine bestimmte Art . . . zum Mittelpunkt der gesamten Religion gemacht und alle übrigen auf dieses eine bezogen worden." The English translation at this point is not wholly accurate. Cf. also p. 220, Eng. tr. p. 236. "You can easily imagine, then, how much more sacred still the moment must be in which this infinite intuition was first set up in the world as the foundation and centre of one peculiar religion."

⁴ This is indeed no easy process. There are many perils to be avoided

We have lingered so long over Schleiermacher's conception of religion, because it is necessary for the understanding of his view of Christianity. No attempt to conceive of Christianity scientifically can be successful, which is not based upon a clear conception of the nature of religion. Here the influence of Schleiermacher is epoch making. It is, indeed, the fashion to-day to criticize his definition as inadequate and one-sided. Religion, we are told, is much more than feeling. It is an affair of the whole man, and includes intellect and will as well. Such criticism, however technically justified, rests upon a misapprehension of Schleiermacher's purpose. He is not attempting an exhaustive definition of religion. He is calling attention to the fact, of which his contemporaries, both orthodox and rationalist, had lost sight, that religion is an integral element in human life, having its roots below all that is secondary and derived, in the recesses of the emotional nature. God, who is the Absolute, is not outside of life, the conclusion of a syllogism, as the philosophers maintain, or even the object of a revelation, as the theologians contend. God is present as a factor in the most familiar experience. We cannot escape Him if we would. Because religion is so grounded in human nature, a scientific conception of any particular religion is possible.¹

on the way, and Schleiermacher is half inclined to doubt whether some of his readers will succeed in finding it. Cf. p. 219 *sq.*, Eng. tr. p. 235 *sq.*; and especially p. 221, Eng. tr. p. 238. But the end is worth the effort. Especially when it is a matter of understanding "the holiest in which the Universe in its highest unity and comprehensiveness is to be perceived" (*i. e.* Christianity), Schleiermacher "cannot be indifferent as to whether or not you find the right point of view."

¹ This is the root of Schleiermacher's well-known conception of

3. *Schleiermacher's Definition of Christianity.*

Having laid this broad basis in the conception of religion, we are prepared to consider more in detail Schleiermacher's view of Christianity. Here the "*Glaubenslehre*" must be our chief source.¹

By Christianity Schleiermacher understands that form of teleological monotheism in which everything is referred to the redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth.² This somewhat technical definition is based upon a preceding classification of religion which is as follows:—

According to Schleiermacher, the differences between

dogmatics as a historical discipline. Since each of the great religions is the expression of a certain characteristic type of feeling, the only way to understand it is to discover in each case what that feeling is, and to follow it out into all its relations and consequences. This involves not merely a study of the history of each religion in the past, but also a careful analysis of its present condition, as it expresses itself in the various utterances of the contemporary religious life. The last is the work of dogmatics, which, because it is not a purely speculative or theoretical study, but is tied to a particular subject-matter given in experience, is to be classed as a historical discipline. Cf. the *Kurze Darstellung*, § 97, Eng. tr. p. 130, and especially the celebrated definition in the *Glaubenslehre*, § 15, "*Christliche Glaubenssätze sind Auffassungen der christlich frommen Gemüthszustände in der Rede dargestellt.*"

¹ Cf. §§ 7-14. Beside the *Glaubenslehre*, the subject is discussed in the *Reden*. Cf. especially II. pp. 46 *sq.*, Eng. tr. pp. 50-56, with note 8, p. 98, Eng. tr. p. 107; and V. p. 196 *sq.*, Eng. tr. p. 211 *sq.*, especially 223-end, Eng. tr. p. 241-end. Cf. also *Kurze Darstellung*, §§ 32-36, Eng. tr. p. 104 *sq.*

² *Glaubenslehre*, § 11. "*Das Christenthum ist eine der teleologischen Richtung der Frömmigkeit angehörige monotheistische Glaubensweise, und unterscheidet sich von andern solchen wesentlich dadurch, dass alles in derselben bezogen wird auf die durch Jesum von Nazareth vollbrachte Erlösung.*"

the historic religions are of two kinds. They are either distinct types, or more or less perfect developments of the same type.¹ It follows from the nature of religion as the feeling of absolute dependence that, of its various forms, the monotheistic is the highest ; the one to which all the others are ultimately destined to conform.² But monotheism alone is not a sufficiently definite principle of classification. It is a necessary stage in the development of all religion, and contains within itself widely different types. These also we must learn to distinguish if we would attain to a scientific classification. Accordingly Schleiermacher further classifies religions as natural or moral, according to the relative stress which they give to considerations of the former or the latter class in their estimate of human affairs.³ By teleological religions Schleiermacher means such as make ethical considerations controlling,⁴ whereas those in which the reverse is the case he designates as æsthetic.⁵ But abstract considerations alone cannot perfectly express the genius of a historical religion. If we would understand its spirit, we must take account of its origin. It is the union of a definite spiritual type with a concrete embodiment in some great historic personality which gives its individuality to any particular religion.⁶ Applying these principles to the definition

¹ *Glaubenslehre*, § 7, I. p. 36

² § 8, I. p. 40.

³ § 9, I. p. 48.

⁴ I. p. 50.

⁵ I. p. 51.

⁶ § 10. "Jede einzelne Gestaltung gemeinschaftlicher Frömmigkeit ist eine theils äusserlich als ein von einem bestimmten Anfang ausgehendes geschichtlichstätiges, theils innerlich als eigenthümliche Abänderung alles dessen, was in jeder ausgebildeten Glaubensweise derselben

of Christianity, we find that it is both a teleological and a monotheistic religion, and that it differs from all others of its class in the fact that in it everything is referred to the redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth.¹

Art und Abstufung auch vorkommt, und aus beidem zusammengenommen ist das eigenthümliche Wesen einer jeden zu ersehen." Cf. also *Reden* p. 218, Eng. tr. p. 234. "If a definite religion may not begin with an original fact, it cannot begin at all."

¹ Apart from the *Glaubenslehre*, Schleiermacher discusses the classification of religions in the *Kurze Darstellung*, §§ 32-36, Eng. tr. p. 104 sq. and in the *Reden*, p. 203 sq. Eng. tr. p. 218 sq. He rejects all merely external classifications, which seek a quantitative determination of religion. Nor can such general divisions as that based upon chaos, system, and elemental multiplicity (p. 206, jene drei so oft angeführten Arten, des Seins und seiner Allheit inne zu werden; als Chaos, als System, und in seiner elementarischen Vielheit), lead to a more satisfactory result. Even the difference between the personal and the pantheistic method of conceiving God is not sufficient to determine the individuality of a religion (p. 207, Eng. tr. p. 222). His conclusion is that the only way to obtain a truly individual religion is to select some one of the great relations of mankind to the Highest Being, and to make it the centre to which all the others are referred. This principle he applies in the *Reden* only to Judaism and Christianity. In the first he finds man's position in the universe, and his relation to the Eternal determined by "a relation of universal immediate retribution, of a peculiar reaction of the Infinite against every finite thing that can be regarded as proceeding from caprice" (p. 222, Eng. tr. p. 239). Christianity, on the other hand, has "a more glorious intuition". It is "the intuition of the universal resistance of finite things to the unity of the Whole, and of the way the Deity treats this resistance. [Christianity sees] how He reconciles this hostility to Himself, and sets bounds to the ever-increasing alienation by scattering points here and there over the whole that are at once finite and infinite, human and divine. Corruption and redemption, hostility and mediation, are the two indivisibly united, fundamental elements (*Grundbeziehungen*) of this type of feeling (*Empfindungsweise*), and by them the whole form of Christianity and the cast of all the religious matter contained in it are determined" (p. 223 sq. Eng. tr. p. 241). Christianity, then, to the *Reden* as to the *Glaubenslehre*, is the religion of redemption. Yet as compared to the *Glaubenslehre*, the relation of Christianity to its founder appears less close and intimate.

The original feature in Schleiermacher's definition of Christianity is the combination of the speculative and the historic. Before his day it had been the fashion either to insist upon the acceptance of the contents of historic Christianity, in its traditional form, at whatever cost to reason or the religious feeling; or else, by artificial and *a priori* methods, to construct a religion of nature and baptize it true Christianity, in spite of the fact that it possessed few, if any, points of contact with the historic religion of that name. Schleiermacher resisted the double temptation. Against traditionalists of all schools he insisted upon the necessity for distinguishing between the essence of a religion and many of the forms in which historically it may have chanced to clothe itself.¹ Against the rationalists he maintained that it is impossible to discover the genius of any great religion apart from a study of its genesis. True religion, he insisted, is not something outside of the historic religions. It realizes itself in them, and reveals itself through them.² All that we need is to have our eyes opened that we may see it. In thus uniting in his definition of Christianity the speculative and the historic he has made himself the father of modern scientific theology.

It is true that in so doing he has laid himself open

¹ *Reden*, p. 219, Eng. tr. p. 236. "Above all, I beseech you, never forget the difference between the essence of a religion, in so far as it is a definite form and representation of religion in general, and its unity as a school." Also p. 220, Eng. tr. p. 237, "I beg you also not to regard everything found in the heroes of religion or in the sacred sources as religion."

² Pp. 213, 214, Eng. tr. pp. 229, 230.

to criticism.¹ Like every great systematic genius, who has sought to combine in a single generalization elements of truth hitherto deemed irreconcilable, he has exposed himself to attack both from the right hand and from the left. His theological contemporaries reproach him with having sacrificed much precious Christian truth to the exigencies of a philosophical theory.² The Christianity which he defends, they tell us, is only the mutilated torso of the true historic Christianity in the defence of which alone they are interested. By his philosophical brethren, on the other hand, he is accused of weakness in retaining in his system much to which his speculative principles give him no right. What is the need, they ask, in the universal religion of feeling, with its infinite variety of shading, of giving any one man the central place which as a matter of fact Schleiermacher assigns to Christ? Where is the place in a religion, whose essence is contact with the God who reveals Himself everywhere, of

¹ For a study of the early critics of Schleiermacher, cf. Gess, "*Uebersicht über das theologische System Dr. Fr. Schleiermacher, und über die Beurtheilungen, welche dasselbe theils nach seinen eigenen Grundsätzen, theils aus den Standpunkten des Supranaturalism, des Rationalism, der Fries'schen und der Hegel'schen Philosophie erhalten hat.*" 2d ed. Reutlingen, 1837.

² Cf. the letter of Sack, referred to by Schleiermacher in his own of July 1, 1801 (Rowan, I. p. 258), in which the former "proceeded to complain of my philosophical system, in doing which he attributed to me, in consequence of a perfect misunderstanding of some of my expressions, a system which he characterized as opposed to all religion, and which is in reality not at all my system." On the effect produced by the *Reden*, cf. Neander, quoted by Oman (p. vi.): "Men of the older generation, adherents of the ancient Christian supernaturalism or earnest rationalists whose living faith in a God above the world and a life beyond was a relic of it, rejected the pantheistic elements in the book with anger and detestation."

a historic redemption once for all accomplished?¹ It cannot be denied that there is a basis for both these criticisms. From the speculative principles of Schleiermacher it is not easy to justify the place which he assigns to Christ, and conversely, his interpretation of Christianity as a historical religion is often unduly

¹ These criticisms are well expressed by Dr. Julius Schaller in his *Vorlesungen über Schleiermacher* of the year 1844. He complains of a lack of foundation for Schleiermacher's doctrine of redemption in his conception of religion (p. 290). The feeling in which Schleiermacher sees the essence of religion is essentially individual, and hence does not lend itself to the classification proposed by our author, whose theory requires a universal religion to which his principles give him no right (pp. 292-294). Schaller sums up his criticism in the conclusion (p. 332 sq.), that the indifference of Schleiermacher's conception of religion does not allow that practical differentiation of Christ from other men which we actually find in the *Glaubenslehre*. The only difference theoretically possible on such principles is a quantitative difference, and to this his distinction of the kinds of religion reduces at last (p. 332).

A somewhat similar criticism is made by Pfeleiderer (*Development of Theology*, p. 105), who traces the inadequacy of Schleiermacher's conception of religion as dependence — a conception which only admits quantitative differences — to the influence of Spinoza.

Cf. also Bender (*Schleiermachers Theologie*, p. 274), who calls attention to the inconsistency of estimating religion according to the intensity of feeling, and at the same time regarding the monotheistic religions as higher in kind.

Schmid takes special exception to the emphasis laid by Schleiermacher upon the redemptive work of Christ to the exclusion of other relations which history shows have been equally important (e. g. that of Teacher or Master or Example). To say, as Schleiermacher does (§ 14), that there is no way to become a Christian save by the acceptance of Jesus as Redeemer, is to exclude from Christian fellowship thousands of devout Christians whose experience does not lead them to recognize this as the central Christian dogma (*Ueber Schleiermachers Glaubenslehre*, pp. 141-145).

Lipsius (*Jahr. für prot. Theol.*, 1875) thinks Schleiermacher's later identification of the ideal and the historic a mistake, and for this reason prefers the view taken of Christ in the *Reden* to that of the *Glaubenslehre* (p. 284 sq.) He quotes with approval Schlegel's remark of the Christianity

affected by his speculative presuppositions.¹ The systematic genius by which he was able to blaze a way through forests hitherto untrodden now and again tempts him to generalizations for which the evidence is all too slight. Later students have been obliged to modify his positions at more than one point. His classification of religions has been found too abstract and *a priori*; unable adequately to express the concreteness and variety of the historic.² But when all is said, it remains true that he stands forth as the greatest

of the *Reden* (p. 288): "Bei aller begeisterten Verherrlichung der christlichen Religion in dem letzten Abschnitte der Reden, bleibt es doch dabei dass es sich, wie Schlegel sagt, am Schlusse, sich annihilire."

¹ Notably in his view of the relation of Christianity to Judaism. Not only does he artificially separate it from Christianity (cf. *Reden*, p. 221, Eng. tr. p. 238), but he gives an entirely inadequate account of the elements which it actually contributed to the preparation for Christ. He finds the fundamental religious intuition of Judaism one of reward and punishment (*Reden*, p. 222, Eng. tr. p. 239), and ignores the deeper, spiritual elements which it has in common with Christianity. Cf. *Glaubenslehre*, I. p. 52, and especially § 12: "Das Christenthum steht zwar in einem besonderen geschichtlichen Zusammenhange mit dem Judenthum, was aber sein geschichtliches Dasein und seine Abzwekkung betrifft, so verhält es sich zu Judenthum und Heidenthum gleich (especially p. 75). Cf. also the criticism of Schmid (*op. cit.* p. 151 sq.).

² In spite of the stress laid upon experience, §§ 8 and 9 of the *Glaubenslehre* give us a speculative deduction of Christianity, which in its *a priori* character reminds us of the dialectics of Kant or of Hegel. Even in the *Reden* we have traces of this tendency. We begin with the varieties of the religious feeling, all of which are supposed to be of equal worth. But feeling alone cannot give us a principle of classification. Hence we find Schleiermacher instinctively shifting his thought from the category of feeling to that of relation. It is the possible relations of man to the highest Being which give us our principle of classification (p. 208, Eng. tr. p. 223). Each great religion has at its base "some one universal religious relation," which is its fundamental intuition (p. 220, Eng. tr. p. 237). This is in substance the Hegelian method, and it is open to all the criticisms to which the system of Hegel is exposed.

figure in the history of modern theology. None before him so clearly apprehended the fundamental problem of Christianity, or has more clearly marked out the lines within which the solution must lie. Like Origen among the older theologians, he sums up in his own person all the different tendencies which before him had existed only in opposition, and the genius by which he was able to reduce the clamorous hosts to order and unity has enabled him to present an ideal for the future, the importance of which no criticism in points of detail can obscure.

It is not our purpose here to enter into a detailed criticism of Schleiermacher's conception of Christianity. It will be sufficient to indicate the elements of his thought which have passed over as a permanent contribution to the future.

First and foremost we should put the renewed emphasis upon the distinctive character of Christianity as a historical religion. To Schleiermacher Christianity is one of the great family of the religions, and whatever dignity or excellence he may attribute to it above its brothers and sisters is consistent with a recognition of their relative independence and rights. This point of view has become so familiar to us to-day that it is difficult for us to realize the significance which attaches to Schleiermacher's thought. The identification of historic Christianity with all true religion to the exclusion of the recognition of differences of growth or of degree—an identification which, as we have seen, has been characteristic of historic Christian thought from Barnabas to Kant—is broken at last. The Pauline

standpoint, so long lost sight of, is once more recovered; and Christianity, as the absolute religion, is contrasted with its predecessors, Jewish as well as Greek.¹ The religion of Israel, divinely revealed though it be, is seen to occupy a lower stage than that of Christ; and the question wherein consists the perfection of Christianity, as distinct from the elder dispensation, is once more distinctly apprehended and clearly stated.

A second conspicuous merit of Schleiermacher's definition is the intimate relation which it establishes between Christianity and its founder. Schleiermacher rightly sees that in the religion of Christ His person occupies a position which cannot be paralleled by that held by the founder of any other faith.² Whatever we may think of the account which he gives of the significance of Christ in detail, it cannot be denied that in emphasizing His central position in Christianity, he is true to the historic facts. This is all the more noteworthy because of the abstract conception from which he takes his departure. His definition of religion, it would seem, might more easily have led him to the conclusion of Barnabas than of Paul. But the sense of the originality and uniqueness of the Master overcomes him, and, first of modern theologians, he writes a definition of Christianity in which the name of its founder occupies the central place. It was Schleiermacher, as Henry B. Smith has finely said, "who led the German Christianity, in its returning course, to our Lord."³

¹ Cf. *Glaubenslehre*, § 12, especially p. 75; *Reden*, p. 221, Eng. tr. p. 238.

² *Glaubenslehre*, I. pp. 70, 71; cf. § 11.

³ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 37.

The particular relation which Jesus holds to his disciples is that of Redeemer. Through Him they are conscious that the obstacle which once separated them from God is removed, and they are once for all reconciled to Him. This insistence upon redemption as the central religious experience is peculiar to Christianity among religions.¹

This is a point at which Schleiermacher's system has been much criticized. Redemption, we are told, is not a distinctive feature of Christianity. It is a characteristic of all religions which have reached a certain degree of development. Nor within Christianity, if history is to be believed, does it hold the central position which Schleiermacher assigns to it. Other relations of Christ have been equally emphasized at different periods of Christian history, as, for instance, that of Master, of Friend, of Teacher, of Example. In the exaggerated emphasis upon the redemptive aspect of Christ's work we have a new instance of the dogmatician trying to force history into the mold of his preconceived theory.²

Whatever may be the relative justice of this criticism, it remains the fact that in emphasizing the redemptive character of Christianity, Schleiermacher has put into the foreground one of the central conceptions of apostolic thought. To Paul and his fellow Christians, Christianity was not simply doctrine, but power. Through Jesus its founder, there had entered into the world a new influence, lifting men out of their ignorance and sin; a power of God unto salvation,

¹ *Glaubenslehre*, I. p. 67 sq.

² Cf. Schmid, *op. cit.*

creating the new and higher life which it revealed. This note of power has been characteristic of the great Christian heroes and saints in all ages. In rescuing it from the oblivion into which it had fallen during the rationalistic period, and giving it a place in his definition, Schleiermacher has pointed theology along a path upon which his successors have felt constrained to follow him.

The Christian church, then, is the fellowship of those whose bond of union in the religious life is the consciousness of a common redemption through Christ. With the mention of the church we touch a new element in Schleiermacher's thought, his stress upon the social aspects of Christianity.

Nowhere is the contrast between Schleiermacher and his predecessors sharper than at this point. To Kant and his contemporaries religion was almost exclusively an individual affair. So far as his relation to God is concerned, each man stands or falls on his own merits without regard to his fellow men. The church is simply an aggregation, larger or smaller, of a number of such independent units. To Schleiermacher, on the other hand, religion is essentially social, and mediation, as we have seen, a universal religious fact. Just because the religious life admits so many varieties, each man requires for his complete development the co-operation of his fellows. Thus in Schleiermacher's theology, the Pauline doctrine of the church, as an organic whole, having many members, each with a different function, receives a late, but none the less timely, restatement.

Our estimate of Schleiermacher's influence would be

incomplete if we did not include a reference to his insistence upon the elements of change and progress which inhere in the nature of a historic religion. He is never weary of calling attention to the possibility, even to the necessity, of individual variations within each of the more general types. This is the meaning of his celebrated reference to the tolerance of Christianity which scorns to be the sole and universal religion.¹ He has abundantly shown that this doctrine was not due to any lack of faith in Christianity as perfect or final. On the contrary, it is the greatness and glory of Christianity which renders an equally clear apprehension of it impossible to all at the same time.² Little by little, through varying experience, men must enter into the richness of the divine life, and no constraint should be put upon them to hamper them in their free development.

Accordingly Schleiermacher finds it only natural that within historic Christianity there should be smaller groups characterized by special affinities of thought

¹ *Reden*, p. 232, Eng. tr. p. 251. Cf. p. 229, Eng. tr. p. 248. " (Christ) never maintained that He was the only mediator, the only one in whom His idea actualized itself. All who attach themselves to him and form His church should also be mediators with Him and through Him."

² Otto Ritschl criticizes Schleiermacher on the ground that his view of Christianity is so high that ordinary people cannot attain to it, and have to make lower religions for themselves. This is really to rob it of its true universality (p. 101). He sums up his criticism of the *Reden* as follows: "Sie geben nicht das Christentum irgendeiner anderen wirklichen oder möglichen Religion preis, sondern sie behaupten vielmehr dessen Einzigkeit und Unübertrefflichkeit im höchsten Grade. Aber indem dies geschieht, wird das Christentum in einer Weise zur Gnosis sublimiert, dass die Möglichkeit verloren geht, es als eine für alle Menschen zugängliche Religion aufrecht zu halten" (p. 106, *Schleiermachers Stellung zur Christentum*).

and feeling. Such, for example, are Catholicism and Protestantism, and the smaller divisions within each. The distinction between these consists in the fact that in the first the relation of the individual to Christ is made to depend upon the church, whereas the second emphasizes the direct relationship between Christ and each believer.¹ Schleiermacher confesses himself a Protestant, and gives reasons for thinking this a truer and higher type of faith than Catholicism.² But the vastness of the Infinite is such that there is room within its bosom for many relations, and he will not quarrel with those who find their communion with God realized in another way.

It will no doubt be asked whether this way of conceiving of Christianity is, as a matter of fact, consistent with its absoluteness. Many of Schleiermacher's critics maintain that on the basis of his theory of religion each historic faith, even the highest, is but a passing form, destined at the last to be superseded and outgrown. To this rule historic Christianity itself is no exception.³ Here it is sufficient to say that this was

¹ *Glaubenslehre*, § 24, I. p. 125. "Sofern die Reform nicht nur Reinigung und Rückkehr von eingeschlichenen Missbräuchen war, sondern eine eigenthümliche Gestaltung der christlichen Gemeinschaft aus ihr hervorgegangen ist, kann man den Gegensatz zwischen Protestantismus und Katholizismus vorläufig so fassen, dass ersterer das Verhältniss des Einzelnen zu Christo abhängig macht von seinem Verhältniss zu Christo, der letztere aber umgekehrt das Verhältniss des Einzelnen zu Christo abhängig macht von seinem Verhältniss zur Kirche."

² See especially the Epilogue to the third edition of the *Reden* (1821), p. 247 sq. Eng. tr. p. 266 sq.

³ So Schlegel, quoted by Lipsius, *op. cit.* p. 288. Cf. also *Reden*, p. 231 sq. Eng. tr. p. 251, "Christianity, exalted above them all, more historical and more humble in its glory, has expressly acknowledged this

certainly not Schleiermacher's own view. Even in the "Reden" he speaks of Christianity as destined to endure till the end of time,¹ and in the "Glaubenslehre" he definitely presents it as the final religion into which all lower forms are destined ultimately to pass over and be taken up.² Not only is Jesus Christ presented as the central figure of history, a being wholly unique;³ but

transitoriness of its temporal existence. A time will come, it says, when there shall no more be any mediator, but the Father shall be all in all."

¹ *Reden*, p. 231, Eng. tr. 250. "For why should it (Christianity) be overthrown? The living spirit of it, indeed, slumbers oft and long. It withdraws itself into a torpid state — into the dead shell of the letter, but it ever awakes again as soon as the season in the spiritual world is favorable for its revival, and sets its sap in motion." Cf. also p. 232, Eng. tr. p. 251, where he expresses his belief that the time when historic Christianity shall be superseded "lies beyond all time."

² *Glaubenslehre*, I. p. 39. The recognition of other forms of piety which stand on the same level of development with Christianity is not inconsistent with "der bei jedem Christen vorauszusetzenden Ueberzeugung von der ausschliessenden Vortrefflichkeit des Christenthums. Denn auch auf dem Gebiet der Natur unterscheiden wir vollkommene und unvollkommene Thiere als gleichsam verschiedene Entwicklungsstufen des thierischen Lebens, und auf jeder von diesen wieder verschiedene Gattungen, die also als Ausdruck derselben Stufe einander gleich sind; dies aber hindert nicht, dass nicht dennoch auf einer niederen Stufe die eine sich mehr der höheren nähert und in sofern vollkommener ist als die andern. Ebenso nun kann auch das Christenthum, wenn gleich mehrere Gattungen der Frömmigkeit dieselbe Stufe mit ihm einnehmen, doch vollkommener sein als irgend eine von ihnen." Cf. also p. 45, "Und so bürgt schon diese Vergleichung mit seines Gleichen dafür, dass das Christenthum in der That die vollkommenste unter den am meisten entwickelten Religionsformen ist." Cf. also § 12, p. 73 sq.

³ Even in the *Reden* he speaks of Christ in the most exalted terms. "What," he asks, "did He see around Him that was not finite and in need of mediation, and where was aught that could mediate but Himself? 'No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him.' This consciousness of the singularity of His knowledge of God and of His existence in God, of the original way in which this knowledge was in Him, and of the power thereof to communicate itself and

the intuition which differentiates Christianity from other religions, so far from being but one among other partial expressions of the supreme religious relation, is itself, as has more than once been acutely pointed out, Schleiermacher's description of that relation in its completeness.¹ While it is true that his principles prevent him from attempting a theoretical proof of the absoluteness of Christianity² — that would be to do violence

awaken religion, was at once the consciousness of His office as Mediator and of His divinity" (p. 229, Eng. tr. p. 247). This uniqueness is still further emphasized in the *Glaubenslehre*. It is the sense of the exceptional position of Christ as the world's Redeemer which constitutes the bond of union of the Christian church (§ 14, p. 83 sq.). Cf. p. 70: "Daher ist nun auch im Christenthum das Verhältniss des Stifters zu den Gliedern der Gemeinschaft ein ganz anderes als in jenen. Denn jene werden vorgestellt als aus dem Haufen gleicher oder wenig verschiedener Menschen gleichsam willkürlich herausgehoben, und was sie als göttliche Lehre und Ordnung empfangen nicht minder für sich empfangend als für Andere. Wie denn auch nicht leicht ein Bekenner jener Glaubensweisen leugnen wird, Gott könne eben so gut das Gesetz durch einen Andern gegeben haben als durch Moses, und die Offenbarung könnte eben so gut durch einen Andern gegeben worden sein als durch Muhamed. Christus aber als allein und für alle Erlöser wird allen Anderen gegenüber gestellt, und wird auf keine Weise selbst irgendwann als erlösungsbedürftig gedacht, daher auch, wie die allgemeine Stimme aussagt, ursprünglich von allen andern Menschen unterschieden und mit der erlösenden Kraft von seiner Geburt an ausgestattet." Cf. also pp. 71 and 75.

¹ E. g. by Bleek, *Grundlagen der Christologie Schleiermachers*, pp. 130, 131. "Was er hier als Grundanschauung des Christentums angiebt, ist eine zusammenstellung der Momente der Religion, wie er sie in den ersten Rede ohne Rücksicht auf eine positive Religion geschildert hat. Als das Merkmal einer individuellen Religion hatte er hingestellt, dass irgend eine einzelne Anschauung zum Centralpunkt der ganzen Religion gemacht und alles auf sie bezogen werde. Das findet bei dem Christenthum, wie er sie darstellt, nicht statt . . . Die einzelnen Religionen sind nur der Stoff, den das Christenthum für die Religion verarbeitet." Cf. also p. 133, "Es lässt sich, von dieser Seite gesehen, nicht behaupten, es sei Schleiermacher nicht gelungen das Christenthum als absolute Religion nachzuweisen."

² Cf. *Glaubenslehre*, I. p. 73. "Auf jeden Beweis für die Wahrheit oder

to the sovereignty of the religious feeling — his system gives us the materials from which such a proof might easily be constructed;¹ and the only point at which the resulting structure would be open to attack would be upon the question whether as a matter of fact the ideal religion thus presented could be fairly identified with the historic faith, of whose contents the “*Glaubenslehre*” claims to be the reproduction. Of the right of this identification we have seen that Schleiermacher has no doubt. Its exhibition and defence in detail he bequeaths as a problem to the future.²

Nothwendigkeit des Christenthums verzichten wir vielmehr gänzlich, and setzen dagegen voraus, dass jeder Christ, eher er sich irgend mit Untersuchungen dieser Art einlässt, schon die Gewissheit in sich selbst habe, dass seine Frömmigkeit keine andere Gestalt annehmen könne als diese.”

¹ As monotheistic, Christianity clearly recognizes the unique and all embracing character of the Being upon whom man depends; as teleological, it extends this dependence to include the highest forms of life as well as the lowest. The Christian is a man who, not in outward things merely, but in his moral and spiritual life, has come to realize his complete dependence upon the one good and holy God who is the indwelling life of the universe. But this is to say that in Christianity the ideal of religion finds its complete realization. For there is no conceivable relation to God which cannot find adequate expression within the limits of this conception.

² The most brilliant attempt to give expression to the absoluteness of Christianity in accordance with the above principles is that of Alexander Schweizer, the well-known Swiss theologian (1808-1888). Defining Christianity with Schleiermacher as the religion of redemption, he sees in it the fulfilment of the ideal of religion itself, and looks for the day when, freed from all that is temporary and transient, it shall gather to itself all that is best and purest in the religious life of the race. For such a victory two things are necessary: 1, its agreement in essence with the ideal of the perfect religion; and 2, its ability to bring this agreement to more and more perfect expression in history. Both of these qualities Schweizer finds united in Christianity. So far from development being inconsistent with the absoluteness of religion, as Strauss maintains, it

To sum up: Christianity, according to Schleiermacher, is that historic religion, founded by Jesus of

is in this way alone that the absoluteness of any religion can be established. For it is only thus that there can be clearly exhibited to men that agreement between the historic and the ideal, in which the truth of religion consists. Cf. his *Christliche Glaubenslehre*, 2d ed., 1877, §§ 32-36, pp. 116-136, especially pp. 123, 124. "Soll eine der historisch positiven Religionen über die ganze Menschheit sich verbreiten und niemals vergehen, vielmehr alle andern früher oder später in sich aufnehmen und als die einzige bleiben bis an's Ende der Zeiten, so muss sie ihrem Wesen nach mit dem Begriff der vollendeten Religion selbst zusammenfallen, ihm zur vollen Erscheinung und Verwirklichung verhelfen und alles diesem nicht Angehörige, somit alles local oder temporal Beschränkte und in diesem Sinn bloss Positive als unwesentlich immer wieder beseitigen können. Das Christenthum muss entweder, wie Strauss es haben will, entwicklungslos sein und darum vergehen oder es muss jenes leisten, denn lebend bleibt es nur wenn es für immer die religiöse Erziehung der Menschheit leitet. . . . Die christliche ist diejenige historische Religion in welcher der Religionsbegriff selbst sich, obschon niemals in einer einzelnen Periode sondern nur im Verlauf aller Perioden, vollständig darstellt und verwirklicht, so dass einerseits alle andern Religionen sich als untergeordnete Vorstufen und geringere Arten zur christlichen verhalten, jedenfalls aber kein religiöses Moment in sich tragen welches nicht voller und reiner im Christenthum enthalten wäre, anderseits aber im vollendeten Begriff der Religion nichts enthalten ist was nicht bis ans Ende der Zeiten im Christenthum sich verwirklichen könnte." Cf. p. 131, "Die unentbehrliche Regel für Ausmittlung des Wahren ist daher gerade nur in diesem Zusammentreffen des christlich historischen mit dem idealen zu suchen; wo dieses unerreicherbar da ist kein Glaube sondern bloss eine Meinung."

Of the other theologians who are most frequently mentioned as followers of Schleiermacher, Twisten and Nitzsch, the former only touches indirectly upon the problem which at present engages us (cf. his *Vorlesungen über die Dogmatik*, 3d ed. 1834, I. p. 19, where he finds the characteristic feature of Christianity in the new divine life which Jesus imparts). The latter, while following Schleiermacher in his conception of religion, parts company with him in his view of Christianity, finding its distinctive feature, after the fashion of the supernaturalists whom Schleiermacher had opposed, in the possession of special revelation, and emphasizing the intimate relation in which it stands to Judaism, as parts of one great economy of redemption and revelation (*System der christlichen Lehre von Dr. C. I. Nitzsch*, 4th ed. Bonn, 1839. Cf. especially

Nazareth, and having its bond of union in the redemption mediated by Him, in which the true relation between God and man has for the first time found complete and adequate expression, and which, throughout all the changes of intellectual and social environment which the centuries have brought, still continues to maintain itself, as the religion best worthy of the allegiance of thoughtful and earnest men.

§§ 30 and 31, where he contrasts the preparation of Judaism as positive with that of heathenism as purely negative). Julius Müller, whom Pfeiderer reckons among the disciples of Schleiermacher (*Development*, p. 123), contributes nothing of importance to the solution of our problem, while Ullman, in his book on the Essence of Christianity (*Das Wesen des Christenthums*, Hamburg, 3d ed. 1849) finds its distinctive feature, "not in its doctrine, nor in its ethical law, nor even in its redemptive power, but in the peculiar constitution and moral and religious significance of its founder as the personality perfectly united with God, at once truly divine and truly human" (p. 86).

CHAPTER VI

HEGELIAN DEFINITIONS

1. *The Hegelian System.*¹

WHILE Schleiermacher was gathering crowds of students in his lecture room at Berlin, another man,

¹ From the extensive literature on Hegel, we cite the following :

(a) Life. A convenient synopsis in Ueberweg, *Hist. Phil. Eng.* tr. II. p. 234 sq. Fuller accounts in the lives of Rosenkranz (*Georg. Wilh. Friedrich Hegels Leben. Supplement zu Hegels Werken*, Berlin, 1844), and of Haym (*Hegel und seine Zeit. Vorlesungen über Entstehung und Entwicklung, Wesen und Werth der Hegelschen Philosophie*, Berlin, 1857). Also E. Caird, *Hegel*, in *Blackwood's Philosophical Classics*, London, 1883.

(b) Works. 19 volumes and supplement, ed. Rosenkranz, Berlin, 1832-44. Eng. tr. of the *Logic* and of the *Philosophy of Mind* by Wallace, Oxford, 1894; of the *Philosophy of History* by Sibree, in Bohn's Library, 1860; of the *History of Philosophy* by Haldane, 3 vols., London, 1892 sq.; of the *Philosophy of Religion* by Speirs and Sanderson, 3 vols. London, 1895 sq.

(c) On the philosophy of Hegel in general, besides the relevant sections in the Histories of Philosophy, cf. Caird, *op. cit.*; Stirling, *Secret of Hegel* (Edinburgh and New York, 1898); Rosenkranz, *Hegel als deutscher Nationalphilosoph* (Leipzig, 1870), Eng. tr. by Hall, *Hegel as the National Philosopher of Germany* (St. Louis, 1874); Harris, *Hegel's Logic* (Chicago, 1890); also many articles in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*; Wallace, *Prolegomena to the Study of Hegel's Philosophy*, and especially of his *Logic* (Oxford, 1894); Seth, *Hegelianism and Personality* (2d ed. Edinburgh and London, 1893); Flint, *Philosophy of History* (1874), p. 496 sq.

(d) Specially on Hegel's philosophy of religion, Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis* (Tübingen, 1835), p. 668 sq.; Pfeiderer, *Development of Theology in Germany and Great Britain* (London, 1890), p. 68 sq.; Höffding, *History of Philosophy*, II. p. 189 sq.; Wenley, *Contemporary Theology and Theism* (New York, 1897), p. 10 sq.; Fairbairn, *Place of Christ in*

no less remarkable for dialectic genius, was laying the foundations of the greatest speculative system of modern times.¹ In Hegel the constructive wing of the Kantian movement reaches its culmination.² The

Modern Theology, p. 213 sq.; and especially Sterrett, *Studies in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion* (New York, 1890), and Pünjer, *Religionsphilosophie*, II. p. 225 sq.

¹ George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was born at Stuttgart, August 27, 1770. His father was an officer of the ducal government. He studied at Tübingen from 1788-1793, taking successively the philosophical and theological courses. Among his fellow-students was Schelling, with whom he afterwards became intimately associated. After leaving the university, where he does not seem to have achieved a distinguished success, he became tutor in a family at Berne. In 1795 he wrote a life of Jesus, in which, with Lessing, he distinguished between Jesus' own conception of religion, and the dogmas of the Christian church (cf. *Ueberweg*, II. p. 235, and ref.). After three years in Switzerland, he returned to Germany, and in 1797 became tutor in a family at Frankfort on the Main. In 1801 he removed to Jena, where he published his first philosophical work, a comparison between the systems of Fichte and Schelling, in which he expressed his agreement with the latter. Soon after he became instructor, and still later Professor at the University. In 1806 he published his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which the differences from Schelling, which had begun to show themselves since 1803, came to clear expression. Leaving Jena in 1806, he was for a time editor of the *Bamberger Zeitung*. In November, 1808, he became director of the Aegidien Gymnasium in Nuremberg, a post which he retained till 1816. During this period he wrote his *Philosophical Propædæutic*, as well as his *Science of Logic*. In 1816 he became Professor in Heidelberg. The next year appeared the first edition of his *Encyclopædia* (2d ed. 1827; 3d ed. 1830). In 1818 he was called to Berlin, where he died on November 14, 1831, less than three years before Schleiermacher. In 1821, he published his *Philosophy of Law*. The *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, of Art, and of Religion*, as well as on the *History of Philosophy*, were published posthumously.

² On the relation of Hegel to Kant, cf. Weber, *History of Philosophy*, p. 473 sq., "Kant and German Idealism"; Stirling, *The Secret of Hegel*, Edinburgh and New York, 1898; Wyneken, *Hegels Kritik Kants*, Greifswald, 1898. Stirling follows out the points of contact in great detail. See *Secret of Hegel*, pp. 20, 92, 98, 157, 167, and especially the quotation from the *Practical Reason* given on page 61. "Because we

Absolute which the master had denied to reason is reaffirmed in a more universal and uncompromising form than ever.¹ The dualism of pre-Kantian philosophy with its antithesis of natural and supernatural; the dualism of Kant himself with his contrast between the noumenal and the phenomenal, gives place to a monism in which all that is is regarded as the manifestation of a single principle.² There is but one reality,

consider here, in its practical function, *pure Reason*, which acts consequently on *a priori* principles, and not on empirical motives, the division of the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason will necessarily resemble that of a Syllogism. That is, it will proceed from the universal in the Major (the moral principle) through a subsumption under the same, in the Minor, of possible (particular) acts (as good or bad) to the conclusion, namely, the subjective actualisation of Will (an interest in the practically possible good and the consequent Maxim). To him who follows with conviction the positions of the Analytic, such comparisons will prove pleasing; for they countenance the expectation that we shall yet attain to a perception of the Unity of the entire business of pure Reason (theoretical as well as practical), and be able to deduce all from a single principle, which is the inevitable demand of human reason; for we can find full satisfaction only in a complete systematic unity of all the possessions of our reason." Stirling finds the secret of Hegel in the fact that "as Aristotle, with considerable assistance from Plato, made explicit the abstract universal that was implicit in Socrates, so Hegel, with less considerable assistance from Fichte and Schelling, made explicit the concrete universal that was implicit in Kant" (p. xxii).

¹ *Philosophie der Religion*, I. p. 4, Eng. tr. I. p. 2. (The translation used is by Speirs and Sanderson, 3 vols., London, 1895.) In religion "the spirit relates itself no longer to something that is other than itself, and that is limited, but to the unlimited and infinite, and this is an infinite relation, a relation of freedom, and no longer of dependence. Here its consciousness is absolutely free, and is indeed true consciousness, because it is consciousness of absolute truth." Cf. I. p. 46, Eng. tr. I. p. 45, where he argues against the view that in religion we can know "only our relation to God, not what God Himself is." Cf. I. p. 93, Eng. tr. I. p. 95. "What we have before us is this one Absolute," etc.

² Hegel himself objects to the term Pantheism, as being misleading,

who is the Absolute. God is not back of experience. He is in experience, everywhere and always. The entire life of the universe, with its ever more complex forms, is to be understood as a single mighty process whose substance is the coming to consciousness of the Absolute.¹ Human reason is but a mode of the infinite reason, and the sum of all finite consciousness is only another name for the mind of God.²

The thought thus expressed is not a new one. Monism is one of the most ancient of philosophies. Not to mention its Eastern forms, the Stoics had given it clear expression among the Greeks. And among the moderns, Spinoza, the God-intoxicated man, before Hegel had set forth the doctrine of the one absolute Substance with equal intellectual acuteness and reli-

and seeming to imply an identification of God with "the infinite manifoldness of single things" (I. p. 94, Eng. tr. I. p. 96). Historic Pantheism, whether in its Oriental form or in Spinozism has never said "All is God," though it has taught that "in everything the divine is only the universal element of a content (*das Allgemeine eines Inhalts*), the Essence of things, while at the same time it is also represented as being the determined or specific Essence of the things." I. p. 94, Eng. tr. I. p. 97. Cf. also I. p. 208, Eng. tr. I. p. 214; *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 185; Pünjer, *op. cit.* II. p. 231.

¹ I. p. 110, Eng. tr. I. p. 114. "The development of God in Himself is . . . the same logical necessity as that of the Universe, and this latter is only in so far inherently divine as it is at every stage the development of this form." Cf. also I. p. 79, Eng. tr. I. p. 79; I. p. 84, Eng. tr. I. p. 85, and in general the whole section beginning, I. p. 59, Eng. tr. I. p. 59.

² I. p. 34, Eng. tr. I. p. 33. "Human reason — the consciousness of one's being — is indeed reason; it is the divine in man, and Spirit, in so far as it is the Spirit of God, is not a spirit beyond the stars, beyond the world. On the contrary, God is present, omnipresent, and exists as Spirit in all spirits." Cf. also I. p. 64 *sq.*, Eng. tr. I. p. 64 *sq.*, and especially I. p. 187 *sq.*, Eng. tr. I. p. 193 *sq.* "The finite is therefore an essential moment of the infinite in the nature of God" (I. p. 193, Eng. tr. I. p. 198).

gious fervor.¹ Nor must we overlook Hegel's immediate predecessors. Without Fichte² and Schelling,³ the *Encyclopædia* would have been impossible. In their writings we have foreshadowed that transition from the subjective to the objective, which is the characteristic feature of the Hegelian philosophy. To Schelling especially Hegel was bound by ties of peculiar intimacy.⁴

¹ *I. e.* in his ethics. The teaching of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, which has to do simply with popular religion, is, as we have seen, very different.

² On Fichte (1762-1814), cf., beside the relevant sections in the *Histories of Philosophy*, Zimmer, *J. G. Fichtes Religionsphilosophie*, Berlin, 1878; Pünjer, *Geschichte der christlichen Religionsphilosophie*, II. p. 60 sq. Fichte's views on religion may be learned from his *Anweisung zum seligen Leben oder die Religionslehre* (1806), Eng. tr. by Smith, *The Doctrine of Religion*. Cf. also his *Speculative Theologie oder allgemeine Religionslehre* (Vol. III. of his *Grundzüge zum System der Philosophie*, Heidelberg, 1846). For a list of his earlier and smaller works, see Pünjer, *op. cit.*

³ On Schelling (1775-1854), cf. the monograph by Weber, *Examen critique de la Philosophie religieuse de Schelling*, Strasburg, 1860; Pünjer, *op. cit.* II. p. 84 sq. For Schelling's views on religion see his *Philosophie und Religion* (1804); and especially his *Philosophie der Mythologie und Offenbarung*, published posthumously by his son (Vols. I.-IV. of the second series of his collected works, Stuttgart, 1856-1858). Three periods may be distinguished in Schelling's religious and philosophical development: 1, that of the philosophy of Nature; 2, that of the philosophy of Identity, in which is affirmed the absolute identity of the ideal and the real; and 3, that of the so-called Positive philosophy, whose content may be represented as "the history of the development of God from pure Being to absolute Spirit." Cf. Pünjer, II. p. 104. See also Flint, *Philosophy of History*, pp. 428, 433 sq.

⁴ See note 1, p. 187. For some years the two men worked together as co-editors of the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*, a journal devoted to the propagation of the philosophy of identity. In spite of later divergences, we find many points of contact between the two. To both the several historic religions are moments in a single great process of revelation, culminating in Christianity, the absolute religion. Both conceive the Absolute as unfolding to full self-consciousness through a

The originality of the latter is to be found less in the central thought of his philosophy than in the extraordinary skill and persistence with which he applies it to the solution of concrete problems. He not only affirms that history is but a form of the coming to consciousness of the Absolute; he tries to show how and why this is the case. With infinite detail, over the widest possible range of subjects; in psychology, in ethics, in politics, in philosophy, in religion, in art, he retraces the steps through which all things have assumed their present form, and sees in each new evidence for his general theme. Among modern philosophers Spencer alone is to be compared with him for this combination of broad generalization with detailed application.

In the working out of the Hegelian scheme, as is well known, logical considerations are determining.¹ The process of human knowledge, with its alternate analysis and synthesis, is the type of the larger process of the universe. All progress is through distinction, and moves through the three steps of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. A simple truth, once discovered, is affirmed as if it were the whole. Presently a larger experience forces man to the recognition of its apparent opposite, only to be succeeded later by the reconciliation

process of growth, and find the chief significance of the historic process which we see, in the fact that it is the obverse or counterpart of a development within God Himself.

¹ *Philosophie der Religion* I. p. 59, Eng. tr. I. p. 59. "There can be but one method in all science, since the method is the self-unfolding Notion (Begriff) and nothing else, and this latter is only one." Cf. also the following context. See also p. 73, Eng. tr. p. 73. "It is when God, the Notion, performs the act of judgment, and the category of determinateness enters, that we first come to have existing religion," etc.

of both in a higher unity. Given this simple formula, Hegel will build you the universe. Holding in his hand this single key, he will unlock for you all the mysteries of life.¹ The imperfections which mar the symmetry and beauty of the universe; its strifes, its sufferings, its sins: these are but passing discords, presently to be resolved into a higher harmony; antitheses due to man's limited point of view, soon to be transcended in a wider vision; steps in the one great process, through which, by stages slow, painful, but none the less sure, the Absolute is coming to full self-consciousness.²

2. *Hegel's View of Religion.*³

Holding this key, it is not difficult to understand Hegel's view of religion. To Hegel the essence of religion is rational. As Schleiermacher had defined

¹ An excellent illustration of the *a priori* character of his thought is to be found on p. 42, Eng. tr. p. 41, where he objects to the merely historical treatment of dogmas, as the overlooking of "the absolute manner of the origin of these doctrines out of the depths of Spirit." Hegel is only interested in those truths whose necessity can be logically proved. Cf. p. 76, Eng. tr. p. 76, "That which is determined by means of the Notion must of necessity have existed, and the religions, as they have followed one upon another, have not arisen accidentally."

² *Philosophie der Religion*, II. p. 282, Eng. tr. III. p. 72. "The sorrow which the finite experiences in being thus annulled and absorbed, does not give pain, since it is by this means raised to the rank of a moment in the process of the Divine." Cf. also II. p. 257 *sq.*, Eng. tr. III. p. 45 *sq.*, where the problem of evil is discussed at length. See also Sterrett, *op. cit.* p. 292.

³ With the fuller discussion of the *Philosophie der Religion* should be compared the relevant sections of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (pp. 509-593) and the *Encyclopädie* (Wallace's translation, *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 175 *sq.*).

religion as absolute feeling, so Hegel defines it as absolute knowledge.¹ Religion is that function of the human spirit through which man comes to understand the true nature of things; or, what is the same thing in other words, through which the Absolute comes to full self-consciousness.² It is the union in thought of the infinite and the finite.³ Beginning in its lower forms with symbols and pictures, slowly differentiating itself from the art which was its cradle,⁴ in Christianity, its highest form, it reveals its true nature and becomes practically identical with philosophy.

Yet while thus emphasizing the rational character of religion, Hegel, as little as Schleiermacher, overlooks

¹ *Phil. d. Rel.* I. p. 24, Eng. tr. I. p. 22. "Religion, then, is itself the standpoint of the consciousness of the True, which is in and for itself, and is consequently the stage of Spirit, at which the speculative content generally is object for consciousness. Religion is not consciousness of this or that truth in individual objects, but of the absolute truth, of truth as the Universal, the All-comprehending, outside of which lies nothing at all. Cf. pp. 4, 103, 241, Eng. tr. pp. 2, 106, 247, and especially p. 88, Eng. tr. p. 90. The conception of religion is "that God is the absolute Truth, the Truth of everything, and that religion alone is absolutely true knowledge."

² I. p. 200, Eng. tr. p. 205. "Religion is therefore a relation of the spirit to absolute Spirit; thus only is Spirit as that which knows, also that which is known. This is not merely an attitude of the spirit towards absolute Spirit, but absolute Spirit itself is that which is the self-relating element, which brings itself into relation with that which we posited on the other side as the element of difference. Thus when we rise higher, religion is the Idea of the Spirit which relates itself to its own self—it is the self-consciousness of absolute Spirit. . . . Accordingly in the Idea in its highest form, religion is not a transaction of man, but is essentially the highest determination of the absolute Idea itself."

³ *Ibid.* "Thus religion is the Divine Spirit's knowledge of itself through the mediation of finite spirit." Cf. also the whole discussion of the relation of finite and infinite, p. 172 sq.

⁴ Cf. *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 172 sq.; also *Phänomenologie*, p. 527 sq.

the rights of the religious feeling. He expressly admits that "the standpoint of feeling" is included in religion as truly as the "standpoint of knowledge."¹ "Feeling is the subjective element;" that which belongs to the consciousness of the individual as an individual. So far, therefore, as God enters into the individuality of man, the place of feeling is assured.² Indeed, there is a sense in which feeling is primary in religion. Before God can become explicit to thought, he must be present implicitly in consciousness. And to Hegel, as to Schleiermacher, the fundamental form of consciousness is feeling.³ In feeling are contained in germ all that we know later as perception (*Anschauung*) and thought (*Vorstellung*). Indeed, the difficulty with feeling is that it is too primary. Its universality makes it indefinite.⁴ It contains within itself the most contradictory elements, "the most debased as well as the highest and noblest."⁵ God Himself, when present in feeling, "has no advantage over the worst possible thing."⁶ If, then, we wish to

¹ *Philosophie der Religion*, I. p. 55, Eng. tr. I. p. 54.

² *Ibid.* Feeling is "that which belongs to me as this individual, and because of which it is to myself that I appeal. The standpoint of feeling, too, in so far as God gives Himself this ultimate individualisation of This one, of one who feels, has its place in the development of the conception of religion," etc.

³ P. 115, Eng. tr. p. 118.

⁴ P. 115, Eng. tr. p. 119. The propositions that we have "immediate knowledge of God," and that feeling is the place where the divine being is thus known "are quite correct, and are not to be denied, but they are so trivial that it is not worth while to speak of them here. If the science of religion is limited to these statements, it is not worth having, and it is not possible to understand why theology exists at all."

⁵ P. 126, Eng. tr. p. 130.

⁶ *Ibid.*

rise to a true determination of God, we must find some more definite principle than feeling, and this to Hegel can be no other than thought.

This explains the prominent place given to dogma in the Hegelian conception of religion. Hegel more than once laments the current depreciation of dogmas, and declares that in them, if anywhere, the truth of religion is to be found.¹ So far from being the external and artificial things they are often represented to be; the creations of chance or of fraud, gaining their authority from tradition, and maintaining themselves by the appeal to supernatural sanction,² they are the forms in which the eternal truths of religion necessarily come to expression.³ The study of these forms, and the discovery and interpretation of the truths which they contain, is the highest task of philosophy.⁴

But interpretation there must be. The dogmas of religion are not themselves pure truth. They are presentations of truth in imaginative form (*i. e.* in the form of *Vorstellungen*, representative concepts),⁵ ideas won

¹ *Philosophie der Religion*, I. p. 39, Eng. tr. I. p. 38.

² On Hegel's view of miracles, see II. p. 323, Eng. tr. III., p. 116 *sq.* While not denying their possibility, he declares that "in and for themselves they supply a merely relative verification, or a proof of a subordinate sort."

³ I. p. 42, Eng. tr. p. 41.

⁴ II. p. 353, Eng. tr. III. p. 148. "Philosophy has been reproached with setting itself above religion: this, however, is false as an actual matter of fact, for it possesses this particular content only and no other, though it presents it in the form of thought: it sets itself merely above the form of faith, the content is the same in both cases." Cf. p. 355, Eng. tr. p. 151.

⁵ On Hegel's doctrine of the *Vorstellung*, cf. *Philosophie der Religion*, I. p. 137 *sq.* Eng. tr. I. p. 142 *sq.*

by a generalization from finite experience, and carrying with them necessarily that pictorial quality which is the inevitable accompaniment of such generalization. There clings to each something of the local, the temporal, the transient; in a word, the finite, without which the imagination, even in its highest and noblest uses, is unable to conceive of reality. For, as the artist, with brush or pen, presents truth in the form of a picture, so the imagination presents truth in the spiritual picture of an idea (*Vorstellung*). It is the work of the philosopher to translate the ideas of religion (*Vorstellungen*) into the forms of pure thought (*Begriffe*). When this is done, man attains absolute truth, and religion becomes one with philosophy.¹

We touch here one of the most difficult points in the Hegelian system, and one in which the abstract language which its author uses renders him most open to misunderstanding.² To Hegel this resolution of the *Vorstellungen* into the forms of pure thought is something very different from that process of abstraction by which the earlier philosophy sought to obtain a knowledge of the Absolute. The Absolute of Hegel is not abstract, but concrete; indeed, the most concrete of all existences.³ He has no patience with the shallow

¹ I. p. 150, Eng. tr. p. 154. "And thus it is that idea (*Vorstellung*) melts into the form of thought, and it is this quality of form which philosophic knowledge imparts to truth." The translation of the later context is misleading, and should be corrected by reference to the original.

² Cf. Stirling, *op. cit.* p. 47. "He talks much of abstract and concrete; but after all, did the concrete ever shine into him but through the abstractions of books?"

³ According to Hegel, it is the function of the philosophy of religion to develop this concreteness in God. Cf. I. p. 88 *sq.* Eng. tr. p. 90 *sq.*

deism of the *Aufklärung*,¹ or even with the more thorough-going transcendence of the earlier pre-critical philosophy. The world of concrete finite experience is not outside of God, but a moment in His consciousness. History is not undivine, but a process within the infinite Spirit of God. To translate *Vorstellung* into *Begriff* is to take an idea, won from finite experience, and false or inadequate when considered merely as such, and to put it into its true place as an element in the infinite and all-embracing consciousness of God. To attain absolute truth, we must lift ourselves above our finite point of view and look at the world and life as it is seen with God's eyes.² But, we repeat, this is not to be done by abstraction from the finite, which remains a moment in truth to the last, but rather by setting it in new relations, and looking at it from a new point of view. This higher viewpoint it is the aim of the Philosophy of Religion to furnish.

But Hegel is not content simply to construct a general conception of religion. He attempts to apply it in detail to the interpretation of the facts of the religious life. If history be in truth the coming to consciousness

especially p. 89, Eng. tr. p. 92. To Hegel the process of resolving *Vorstellung* into *Begriff* is one of concretion rather than of abstraction. For, according to the Hegelian logic, the *Begriff* is itself concrete, p. 150, Eng. tr. p. 154. On this aspect of the Hegelian thought, cf. Stirling pp. 64, 92, 161.

¹ *Philosophie der Religion*, I. pp. 33, 154, Eng. tr. I. pp. 32, 158.

² I. p. 198, Eng. tr. p. 204. "Now, however, that the finite and the standpoint of reflection have annulled themselves, we have reached the standpoint of infinite observation, and of the speculative Notion, namely the sphere in which the true notion or conception of religion will unfold itself before us."

of the Absolute, and if it be religion in which this august process culminates, then it must be possible to classify the historic religions according to the part which each has played in the realization of this ideal. And this is, in fact, what Hegel undertakes to do. In this attempt, he makes use of the three principles of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. In the religious experience we may distinguish three elements; the idea of the infinite, or the universal element; the antithesis of the finite and the infinite, or the particular element; and the union of the two in the higher synthesis of worship.¹ This primary analysis leads to a second, in which the conception of religion in general is contrasted with the particular or definite religions, in which its several moments come to more or less clear expression, only that both alike may find their union in the absolute or perfect religion.² It is in the sphere of the definite religions that Hegel meets the problem of classification. Here, as always, true to his ideal, he begins with an analysis of the idea into its elements, and then turns to history to find the verification of his analysis in experience.³ Passing over savage religion, in which the self-consciousness of man has not yet awakened,⁴ we find on the one hand the pantheistic religions, in which the universal element in religion is emphasized to the exclusion of the individual. The

¹ *Philosophie der Religion* I. pp. 61-73, Eng. tr. pp. 60-73. This is worked out more in detail in pp. 87-252, Eng. tr. pp. 89-258.

² Pp. 73-84, Eng. tr. pp. 73-85.

³ Pp. 255-262, Eng. tr. pp. 261-269.

⁴ This primitive stage is discussed in pp. 263-308, Eng. tr. pp. 270-316. Its characteristic expression is magic.

chief representatives of this class are the religion of China, and the two Indian religions, Brahmanism and Buddhism. In these the individual, while distinguishing himself from God, feels himself as nothing compared with the Absolute.¹ On the other hand are the religions of spirit, represented by Israel, Greece, and Rome. Here the individual comes to his rights. The subject feels himself lord over nature, which still remains, however, an alien substance, foreign in nature to its master. Transcendence, in one form or another, is a common feature of all these religions.² Midway between the two, we find an intermediate stage, in which the awaking spirit clearly recognizes its separateness from nature, but without having yet discovered its lordship over it. This is the place of the dualistic religions of Persia, of Syria, and of Egypt.³ Finally, the ideal of religion is realized in Christianity, which combines in a higher synthesis the elements of truth both in the religions of nature and of spirit. In Christianity the spirit distinguishes itself from nature, only to find itself there in a different form, and to recognize in its unity with itself as immanent and transcendent at once the ultimate reality and the absolute truth.⁴

¹ I. pp. 308-338, Eng. tr. pp. 317-end; I. pp. 339-401, Eng. tr. II. pp. 1-65.

² II. pp. 1-188, Eng. tr. II. pp. 122-323.

³ I. pp. 401-456, Eng. tr. II. pp. 65-122.

⁴ On Hegel's classification of religions, cf. Pünjer, *op. cit.* II. p. 241 sq.; Sterrett, p. 233 sq. The classification of Weber (*Hist. of Phil.*, p. 529 sq.) does not correspond with that given in the *Philosophie der Religion*, nor have I been able to find its source. Weber makes Hegel contrast the pantheistic religions of the East, together with Mosaism, as religions of the infinite, with the religion of Greece, in which the finite comes to its

Whatever may be thought of the positive merits of this classification, one cannot deny that it stands for a great idea. Hegel's book is the first comprehensive treatment of comparative religion. In place of the vague generalizations which had hitherto served to cloak men's ignorance as to detail, we have an elaborate discussion, based upon the widest reading and research, and gathering up, in a form convenient for use, all the available knowledge of the time. With all recognition of the errors of fact, due to the artificial and *a priori* character of the construction, it remains true that Hegel's classification of the religions is an epoch-making achievement. Even those who criticize him most severely themselves stand upon his shoulders.¹

rights. This is not the division followed either in the *Phänomenologie*, the *Encyclopädie*, or the *Philosophie der Religion*.

If we arrange the religions in tabular form we should have the following division:—

I. Natural religion.

1. Immediate sensuous religion (savage religion).
2. Pantheistic religions.
 - a. The religion of China, or of Measure.
 - b. The religion of India, or of Imagination (Brahmanism).
 - c. Buddhism, or the Religion of Being-in-itself.
3. Transition from Nature to Spirit (Dualism).
 - a. Parseeism or the religion of Light and Darkness.
 - b. The Syrian religion, or the religion of Pain.
 - c. The Egyptian religion, or the religion of Mystery.

II. Spiritual religion.

1. The religion of Israel, or of Sublimity.
2. The religion of Greece, or of Beauty.
3. The religion of Rome, or of Utility.

III. The Absolute or Revealed Religion, Christianity.

¹ De la Saussaye, quoted by Wenley, *Contemporary Theology and Theism*, p. 12. "The fundamental principles of Kant's and Schleiermacher's systems supplied some foundation stones on which to erect a philosophy

But our present concern is not so much with Hegel's view of religion in general, as with his conception of Christianity. It is time to consider this somewhat more in detail.

3. *Hegel's Conception of Christianity.*

Hegel's conception of Christianity is most fully set forth in the latter part of his *Philosophy of Religion*.¹ Here he develops in detail the view of the absolute religion which he had already outlined in his *Encyclopædia*.² True to his method, he begins with a speculative construction, which he then proceeds to verify by comparison with the historic facts.

In the absolute religion we should expect to find the summing up of the entire process of the preceding religious history; the unity, in a single conception, of the several moments which hitherto have existed only in their separateness.³ God must be known, not only in Himself, as the universal principle, complete in Himself and to Himself sufficient; not only as the creator and revealer, the principle of differentiation and of free self-

of religion. But we must recognize Hegel as its true founder, because he first carried out the vast idea of realizing, as a whole, the various modes of studying religion (metaphysical, psychological, and historical), and made us see the harmony between the idea and the realization of religion. No one approaches him in this respect." See also Sterrett, p. 233; Pünjer, II. p. 241.

¹ Vol. II. p. 192 sq., Eng. tr. Vol. II. p. 327 sq.; Vol. III. With this should be compared the discussion of Christianity in the *Philosophie der Geschichte*.

² *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 175 sq. Cf. also the *Phänomenologie*, p. 561 sq.

³ *Philosophie der Religion*, I. p. 76 sq., Eng. tr., p. 76 sq.: "The essential moments," etc.

assertion, contrasting Himself with the world and manifesting His will upon it; but as the unity of the two, at once immanent and transcendent, at once infinite and finite. This is what we find in historic Christianity. In the doctrine of the Trinity we have the union in a higher synthesis of all the moments which the previous historical process has given us in their isolation. God is revealed as the Father, the ultimate principle of the Godhead, existing in and for Himself from all eternity; He is revealed as the Son, the principle of difference in the Godhead, separating Himself from the Father in creation only to return again in the higher synthesis of redemption; He is revealed finally as the Holy Spirit, through whom Father and Son recognize Their unity, and God comes to His full self-consciousness as Spirit.¹

Such is Christianity, the absolute religion, in which the eternal dialectic which is immanent in the Being of God works itself out to full expression in history. Here at last we have clearly set forth the meaning of the entire process through which, from the beginning of time, the whole creation, with groanings unutterable, has been blindly laboring. This is what men mean when they call Christianity the revealed religion.² Not

¹ On Hegel's view of Christianity, see Pünjer, II. p. 245 sq.; Sterrett, p. 268 sq.; Stirling, pp. 100 sq.; 176 sq.; 721 sq.

² *Philosophie der Religion*, II. p. 192 sq. Eng. tr. II. p. 328 sq. By calling Christianity a revealed religion, Hegel means two things: 1, That in Christianity God is no longer an external object, but is known as Himself coming to consciousness in the finite ego; 2, That this knowledge is communicated to man by God Himself, which constitutes Christianity in the narrower sense a revealed or positive religion. These two ideas are expressed by the two German words "offenbar" and "geoffenbart," which we may perhaps render by the terms "manifest" and "revealed." Cf. Pünjer, II. p. 245.

as though we would assert that the other religions are false, and Christianity alone true, but that Christianity alone sees the elements of truth in their relation and proportion, looks out over the world process with a clear perception of its meaning, beholds things in their eternal reality, even as they appear to the eye of God.

We need not follow Hegel through all the intricacies of his dialectic construction. The speculative discussion of the Philosophy of Religion should be supplemented by the more concrete treatment of the Philosophy of History.¹ The latter sets Christianity in its environment, as a fact of experience, to be described as well as explained. To Hegel, as truly as to Schleiermacher, Christianity centres in Jesus Christ. But in the history, as in the philosophy, it is not so much the person of Jesus which interests him, as the doctrine of His person. In the Christian dogma of the incarnation we have the perfect union of the divine and the human; the revelation of the infinite in the form of the finite. This, as we have seen, is the ultimate truth which underlies all life; the supreme insight, to give expression to which all the earlier religions were striving. Possessing this, Christianity justifies its claim to be the perfect religion.

Yet it would be a mistake to think that Hegel has no interest in the historical aspect of Christianity as such. He has no sympathy with the view which sees in Christianity simply an eternal truth, of which history is but the more or less perfect symbolical expression.

¹ *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, 2d ed., ed. Karl Hegel, Berlin, 1840, p. 387 sq., Eng. tr. by Sibree, p. 330 sq.

Christianity is fact as well as idea, or rather it is idea which has realized itself in fact. The unity between God and man which "exists in the first place simply for the thinking speculative consciousness" must also "exist for the sensuous representative consciousness. It must become an object in the world. It must *appear*, and that in the sensuous form appropriate to spirit, which is the human."¹ This is what has actually happened in Christianity. "*Christ has appeared* ; a Man who is God ; God who is Man, and thereby peace and reconciliation have accrued to the world."² If this be not true, Hegel is of all philosophers the most miserable.

Christianity, then, is the supreme fact, as well as the ultimate truth ; but this is a very different thing from saying that all that has come down to us under the name of Christianity is true. The great reality in which religion centres, while given once for all, is only gradually apprehended by man ; and the process of this apprehension is attended with many dangers and mistakes. The reconciliation which God has wrought in Christ needs to become the common property of Christians, and this is possible only through the same dialectical process with which we have already been made familiar. This accounts for Hegel's great interest in the history of dogma. For it is this history, with its successive thesis and antithesis, excluding heresies on the right hand and on the left, shrinking from no conclusions to which its dialectic seems to lead, however apparently contradictory they may appear ; it is this history, we repeat, in which the absolute truth, already

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 394, Eng. tr. p. 336.

² *Ibid.*

implicitly given in Christ, is little by little made explicit to the Christian consciousness.¹ Dogma of dogmas is the Trinity, to Hegel the *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae*. For it is the Trinity in which the entire dialectic of revelation is gathered to a head.² Here we have — to be sure still in the form of *Vorstellung*, and so needing the translation which philosophy alone can give — the quintessence of truth, the supreme insight, in which religion and philosophy are one. To grasp this in its completeness, and to state it in the terms of pure thought which no fires of criticism can dissolve is to establish beyond peradventure the absoluteness of Christianity.

If we compare the definition of Hegel with that of Schleiermacher we find many points of resemblance. To both Christianity centres in the historic Christ, the unique mediator between God and man; the one through whom that reconciliation is made possible of which all future history is the successive appropriation. Both have a keen sense for the varieties in the historic religions. To both the Trinity, with its reconciliation of preceding differences, is the distinctive Christian dogma.³ But side by side with these superficial resem-

¹ The application of this dialectic method in detail to the treatment of the history of doctrine was, as is well known, the work of Baur and his school.

² *Philosophie der Religion*, I. p. 40, Eng. tr. I. p. 39; II. p. 226 sq. Eng. tr. III. p. 9 sq. See especially II. p. 227, Eng. tr. III. p. 11: "This eternal idea, accordingly, finds expression in the Christian religion under the name of the Holy Trinity, and this is God Himself, the eternal Triune God." Cf. also Stirling, p. 722.

³ Compare Hegel's construction of Christianity in the third volume of his *Philosophie der Religion*, with the trinitarian structure of Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre*.

blances, we note differences of far-reaching importance. Far more significant than the contrast between the elements of feeling and of thought, in which the characteristic distinction between the two systems is often found, is the fundamental difference of viewpoint. Schleiermacher, for all his insistence upon the infinity of religion, approaches the problem from the point of view of the finite. If he affirms the absoluteness of religion, it is because he finds the Absolute given in the religious experience, as a matter of fact. But it never occurs to him to abandon his dependent position as finite, and to transport himself in thought into the Being of God. To Hegel, on the other hand, the subjective dialectic of thought is the revelation of objective realities. What takes place on a small scale, in my human experience, must reproduce itself on a large scale within the consciousness of God. And theology, like philosophy, seeking ultimate realities, must lift itself above the finite and see things with the eyes of God. To understand any historical phenomenon, therefore, we must look at it, as it were, from above, and find in it simply the verification in fact of that which we have already been able to construct *a priori* through the dialectic of thought. Christianity itself is simply the expression in time of a truth already clearly apprehended by the philosopher apart from all history. Here we have the deductive method carried to its farthest extreme. Not Thomas Aquinas himself is bolder in his ontology.

The *a priori* and deductive character of Hegel's thought accounts for the historical errors into which

he often falls. The man who starts with a complete construction of reality before he approaches the facts will be more than human if he does not sometimes stretch the facts to meet the necessities of his construction. Hegel, philosopher though he was, was but human, and the criticisms which have been brought against his system by historians and students of comparative religion are but too well justified in fact. But there is another side to the matter, which in justice to our philosopher we must not overlook. No one will long have patience to study a subject of the meaninglessness of which he is convinced. In inspiring men with a belief in the rationality of history, Hegel not only revived an interest in history as a study which before him did not exist, but became the father of a method to which, in spite of all exaggerations, we owe some of the most fruitful results of modern times. This is especially true in connection with the study of Christianity.

4. *The Disciples of Hegel.*¹

In spite of the large place given to the subject in his writings, the definition of Christianity is to Hegel only

¹ On the earlier disciples of Hegel, Daub, Rosenkranz, Marheinecke, Göschel, Erdmann, Hasse, Schaller, etc. cf. Lichtenberger, *Histoire des idées religieuses en Allemagne depuis le XVIII^{me} Siècle jusqu'à nos jours*, Paris, 1888, Vol. II. p. 315 sq., where the literature may be found in full; also Pünjer, *op. cit.* II. p. 257 sq. On Daub cf. D. F. Strauss, *Charakteristiken und Kritiken*, Leipzig, 1839 ("Schleiermacher und Daub, in ihrer Bedeutung für die Theologie unsrer Zeit"). For the Hegelian criticism of Schleiermacher, cf. the works of Rosenkranz, Schaller, and Gass, already referred to.

The most influential of Hegel's disciples was F. C. Baur (*Die christliche*

an incident in a larger scheme. As has already been sufficiently shown, the philosophical interest is controlling with him, rather than the religious.¹ Christianity is primarily truth, not power, and truth which does not

Gnosis, Tübingen, 1835. Cf. also his *Kirchengeschichte*, and his various monographs on the history of Christian doctrine). Less conservative tendencies are represented by Strauss (*Christliche Glaubenslehre*, 2 vols. Tübingen, 1840; *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, 4th ed., Leipzig, 1873. On Strauss, cf. Hausrath, *David Fr. Strauss und die Theologie seiner Zeit*, 2 vols. Heidelberg, 1876; Eck, *David Friedrich Strauss*, Stuttgart, 1899; Fairbairn, *Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, New York, 1893, p. 230 sq.); and Feuerbach (*Das Wesen des Christenthums*, 3d ed. Leipzig, 1849; Eng. tr. by Marian Evans, from the second German ed., 2d ed. Boston, 1881).

Later theologians usually classed as Hegelian are: Biedermann: (*Christliche Dogmatik*, 2 vols. Berlin, 1884 sq.) and Pfeiderer (*Religionsphilosophie*, 1st ed. 1878, 3d ed. 1896; *Gifford Lectures for 1894 on the Philosophy and Development of Religion*; *Grundriss der christlichen Glaubens- und Sittenlehre*, 4th ed. Berlin, 1888; *Evolution and Theology*, London, 1900, especially p. 80 sq. on "The Essence of Christianity").

The chief representatives of Hegelianism in Great Britain are the brothers Caird. Cf. John Caird, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, New York, 1880; *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, Gifford Lectures, 2 vols. Glasgow, 1899; Edward Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, Gifford Lectures for 1890, 1891, New York, 1893, 2 vols. See also the works of Thomas Hill Green; and among Americans, Sterrett, *Studies in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, New York, 1890, and the writings of W. T. Harris, already referred to.

¹ This appears most clearly in the closing paragraphs of his *Philosophie der Religion*, II. p. 355, Eng. tr. III. p. 131. "For us philosophical knowledge has harmonized this discord, and the aim of these lectures has been to reconcile reason and religion, to show how we know this latter to be in all its manifold forms necessary, and to rediscover in revealed religion the truth and the Idea.

"But this reconciliation is itself merely a partial one without outward universality. Philosophy forms in this connection a sanctuary apart, and those who serve in it constitute an isolated order of priests, who must not mix with the world, and whose work is to protect the possession of Truth. How the actual present-day world is to find its way out of this state of disruption, and what form it is to take, are questions which must be left to itself to settle, and to deal with them is not the immediate practical business and concern of philosophy."

differ in substance from that which is the subject of philosophy in general. But the new impulse thus received soon made itself felt in distinctly theological circles. Christian doctrine came to be studied with new enthusiasm in the light of the evolutionary principle. Baur and his school began to construct the history of Christianity according to the threefold principle of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Judaism, Paulinism, and the reconciliation of both in the theology of John; Greek Catholicism, Roman Catholicism, and the overcoming of the antithesis in the higher religious insight of Protestantism: such thoughts as these became familiar ones in Christian circles. The problem of the definition of Christianity, first revived by Schleiermacher, was taken up again, in the light of the new ideas, and a circle of definitions was constructed, which, in spite of all differences in detail, may still be classed together as Hegelian.

Two distinct tendencies of theological thought take their departure from Hegel. The first magnifies the abstract or *a priori* element in his teaching, tends to identify religion and philosophy, and, with the identification, becomes more and more critical of the distinctive features which have characterized Christianity as a historic religion. The other approaches more and more closely to the positions of the traditional Christian theology, sees in historic Christianity the result of a special divine revelation, and seeks through the principles of the Hegelian philosophy a rational defence of its distinctive doctrines.

The early Hegelians were as a rule conservative in

their theological views. Like their master, they saw in the new philosophy the means of demonstrating the rationality of Christianity, and gave themselves to the task of showing this in detail with an industry and devotion beyond praise. Side by side with the more distinctly historical students, whose connection with the Tübingen movement has preserved their memory while that of their less fortunate colleagues is forgotten,¹ there was a group of theologians, men like Daub, Marheinecke and others, whose names are less familiar, who saw in Christianity "the absolute synthesis of the finite and the infinite,"² and in the incarnation the central reality of Christianity. To Marheinecke, for example, "the historic Christ is the realization of the divine ideal in a human individuality. In Him God knows Himself man, and man knows himself God; in Him the contradiction between the human and the divine, the ego and the Absolute no longer exists. Christ has not merely reconciled humanity with God, but He is Himself the reconciliation in His own person and in His life. . . . In His person humanity arrives at the knowledge of its divinity."³ Truly it would seem as if Christian faith could ask no more.

But the conservative elements in the Hegelian system were matched by others more radical. The dialectic, which its author had used for the defence of Christian dogma, proved equally effective for its destruction. The historical criticism, which Baur employed in good faith for the recovery of what he deemed to be essential

¹ *E. g.* Zeller, Schweigler, Hilgenfeld, Volkmar, Holsten, etc.

² Lichtenberger, *op. cit.* II. p. 337.

³ *Ibid.*

Christianity,¹ had its counterpart in the "Leben Jesu" of Strauss,² in which the union between idea and history so essential to the Hegelian system in its purity is dissolved. What the "Leben Jesu" is to the central dogma of the incarnation, that the "Glaubenslehre" of Strauss is to the Christian system as a whole.³ Here we find a criticism of the Hegelian theology which for acuteness and insight has not often been surpassed. Dogma, so far from being essential truth in pictorial form, is only the naïve language of the uninitiated man, certain to be dissolved into its elements through the same historical process which created it.⁴ Still more negative is the outcome of his last book, "Der alte und der neue Glaube."⁵ Contrasting the modern view of the world with that of the older faith, Strauss raises the question whether any sense remains in which it is still possible for a modern man to call himself a Christian, only to answer it flatly in the negative.⁶

¹ On the constructive aspect of Baur's work, cf. Nash, *History of the Higher Criticism of the New Testament*, New York, 1900, p. 128 sq. p. 156. See also the article on Baur in Herzog, *Real-Encyclopädie*³, and literature there cited.

² The *Leben Jesu* appeared in 1835. Twenty-nine years later (1864) Strauss published his second *Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet*."

³ *Die christliche Glaubenslehre in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung und im Kampfe mit der modernen Wissenschaft*," 2 vols. Tübingen, 1840.

⁴ Cf. especially I. p. 68 sq. : "Aufgabe der Dogmatik in unserer Zeit." In this section he expresses supreme contempt for all attempts to mediate between orthodoxy and scientific theology, and declares that a truly historical study of dogma means its dissolution. Cf. p. 71 : "Die wahre Kritik des Dogmas ist seine Geschichte."

⁵ *Der alte und der neue Glaube, Ein Bekenntniss*, Leipzig, 1872.

⁶ P. 90 : "Also meine Ueberzeugung ist: wenn wir nicht Ausflüchte suchen wollen, wenn wir nicht drehen und deuteln wollen, wenn wir nicht Ja Ja und Nein Nein bleiben lassen wollen, kurz wenn wir als ehrliche

The clearest expression of the destructive tendency of the Hegelian movement is given in Ludwig Feuerbach's "Essence of Christianity."¹ He utterly renounces the absolute Mind of Hegel,² and takes his stand squarely within the experiences of the finite. Dialectic there is still, but its significance is purely subjective. Religion is "the disuniting of man from himself;" the contemplation by man, under the form of God, of what is really "only his own latent nature."³ There can be no theology distinct from psychology and anthropology.⁴ To discover the essence of Christianity, therefore, we must learn what are the human desires and feelings of which the historic dogmas are the expression. But this discovery is also their dissolution.⁵

aufrichtige Menschen sprechen, so müssen wir bekennen: wir sind keine Christen mehr." Even the question whether we still have a religion leads to doubtful results. It all depends on what you mean by religion (p. 143).

¹ *Das Wesen des Christenthum*, Leipzig, 1849, in his *Sämmtliche Werke*, Vol. VII. English tr. from the 2d Germ. ed. by Marian Evans, 1855. We quote from the second American ed. of 1881.

² Preface, p. ix [VII. p. 12].

³ P. 33 [VII. p. 65]. Cf. p. 29 [VII p. 61]. "Man — this is the mystery of religion — projects his being into objectivity, and then again makes himself an object to this projected image of himself thus converted into a subject." P. 181. "As God is nothing else than the nature of man purified from that which to the human individual appears, whether in feeling or thought, a limitation, an evil," etc. Preface, p. x [VII. p. 13]. "It is not I, but religion, that worships man."

⁴ P. 230 [VII. p. 311.] "Only when we abandon a philosophy of religion, or a theology, which is distinct from psychology and anthropology, and recognize anthropology as itself theology, do we attain to a true, self-satisfying identity of the divine and human being, the identity of the human being with itself."

⁵ Cf. p. 339 [VII. p. 437]. "The reduction of the extrahuman, supernatural, and antirational nature of God to the natural, immanent, inborn nature of man, is therefore the liberation of Protestantism, of Christianity in general, from its fundamental contradiction."

For in founding love (as does Christianity) upon a "special historical phenomenon," we contradict the nature of love "which endures no limits."¹ This unchristian limitation it is necessary for us to outgrow. The true Christian is the man who has turned his back upon historic Christianity.²

Much more positive is the result reached by the last great representative of the Hegelian theology. In Biedermann's "*Dogmatik*,"³ we find the same distinction between *Vorstellung* and *Begriff* with which we have already been made familiar. But the translation of the pictorial representations of Christian dogma into the forms of pure thought, however negative its results may seem to be at the time, has as its final end a firmer

¹ P. 268 [VII. p. 358].

² P. 269 [VII. p. 360]. "He therefore who loves man for the sake of man, who rises to the love of the species, to universal love, adequate to the nature of the species, he is a Christian, is Christ himself. He does what Christ did, what made Christ Christ. Thus, where there arises the consciousness of the species as a species, the idea of humanity as a whole, Christ disappears, without however his true nature disappearing; for he was the substitute for the consciousness of the species, the image under which it was made present to the people, and became the law of the popular life."

Feuerbach has a very clear appreciation of the fact that Christianity as a historic religion centres in Christ. Cf. p. 150 [VII. p. 209]: "Christ, therefore, is the distinction of Christianity from heathenism"; p. 148 [VII. p. 207]: "Christ alone is the personal God; he is the real God of Christians, a truth which cannot be too often repeated. In Him alone is concentrated the Christian religion, the essence of religion in general." In yielding its place to the new religion of humanity, which Feuerbach advocates, Christianity is but submitting to the law of which its own criticism of Judaism is the most notable example. For "in relation to the Israelite, the Christian is an *esprit fort*, a free-thinker. Thus do things change. What yesterday was still religion is no longer such to-day; and what to-day is atheism, to-morrow will be religion," p. 32 [VII. p. 64].

³ *Christliche Dogmatik*, 2d ed., 1884, 1885, 2 vols.

grasp on objective reality. In religion we come to know God as He really is. Limited though he be as creature,¹ as spirit, man is capable of union with God.² This union comes to pass through religion, which is at once the self-revelation of the infinite Spirit to the finite, and at the same time the progressive self-realization of the Absolute in the world.³ In the perfect harmony of the finite spiritual life with that of God, the absolute Spirit, the ideal of humanity is realized.⁴ This end is actually attained in Christianity, in which the ideal of divine sonship, revealed in Jesus Christ,⁵ presents itself as "the perfect union of the divine and the human in the unity of a personal spiritual life."⁶ It is true that in its historic statements, in the doctrines of the incarnation and of the person of Christ, the true

¹ § 743, II. p. 563.

² § 751, II. p. 566.

³ § 718, II. p. 547. "Der Geist ist *actus purus*; der absolute Geist ist der *actus purus*, durch den der gesammte Weltprocess ist. Dieser *actus purus* des absoluten Geistes hat drei nicht getrennte, aber wesentlich unterscheidbare und darum für unser von der Welt ausgehendes Bewusstsein als verschiedene Stufen erscheinende Momente: 1, das Setzen der Welt als Naturprocess ausser Gott; 2, die Selbstoffenbarung an den endlichen Geist in der Welt, und 3, die Selbstverwirklichung absoluten Seins im endlichen Geist auf dem Boden der Welt."

⁴ § 755, II. p. 567. "Das Ziel des Menschen, die Zweckerfüllung seiner creatürlichen Gottebenbildlichkeit, ist das wie formal so real wirkliche Geist-sein des Ich, die selbstbewusste und selbstgewollte subjective Uebereinstimmung des *actus purus* seines endlichen Geisteslebens mit dem absoluten Geist, die als Liebeeinheit mit Gott unmittelbare Wirklichkeit in ihm ist."

⁵ § 789, II. p. 580. "Das in der religiösen Persönlichkeit Jesu Christi als unmittelbare religiöse Thatsache der Gotteskindschaft gestellte Problem der Gottmenschheit."

⁶ § 795, II. p. 583. "Die reale Einigung des göttlichen und des menschlichen Wesens zur wirklichen Einheit persönlichen Geisteslebens."

significance of this principle is obscured.¹ Theology, failing to distinguish between principle and person, has affirmed of Jesus the man what is true only of His Gospel, with the result that it has become involved in a maze of contradictions from which it must be the first business of a Christian philosophy to deliver it. But this does not mean that the person of Christ is unessential in Christianity. On the contrary, it is in the person of its founder that the principle has first received its clear expression.² In Christ there is really a perfect union of the infinite with the finite, and the filial spirit which He Himself uniquely embodied. He is the means of creating in others.³ Thus the relation between His person and His work which history discloses is grounded in permanent considerations.⁴ He is indeed, as His disciples have rightly called Him, both Master and Saviour,⁵ and the absolute religion, in which all pre-

¹ § 790, II. p. 580. "Als der Grundwiderspruch, an dem jede Lösung des christologischen Problems scheitern musste, hat sich uns die in der historischen Genesis und Entwicklung des Dogmas natürlich gegebene und bedingte Identification des christlichen Princips mit der Person Jesu Christi, seiner historisch-primitiven Verwirklichung, herausgestellt."

² § 795, II. p. 583. "Dieses christliche Princip — das als solches erst in der religiösen Persönlichkeit Jesu und im Glauben an diese thatsächlich in die Menschheitsgeschichte eingetreten ist."

³ § 815, II. p. 593. "Diese Thatsache (*i. e.* the fact that Jesus' personal religious life is the first self-realization of the Christian principle 'zu einer weltgeschichtlichen Persönlichkeit') ist der Quellpunkt der Wirksamkeit dieses Princips in der Geschichte."

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 592. "Das Verhältniss der historischen Person Jesu zur Wirksamkeit des mit ihm in die Geschichte eingetretenen und von ihm geschichtlich ausgehenden christlichen Princips, und damit die Bedeutung Jesu für das gesammte Christenthum, ist kein äusserliches und accidentelles, sondern ein innerliches und bleibendes."

⁵ § 816, II. p. 593.

ceding and less perfect forms culminate, is rightly called by His name.¹

5. Other Speculative Definitions.²

Our view of the Hegelian movement would be incomplete if it did not include some reference to the new impulse given by the philosophy of Hegel to men who cannot themselves be classed as belonging to his school.

¹ Among living theologians, Pfleiderer is often classed with Biedermann as a Hegelian (so by Pünjer, II. p. 297 — an opinion based upon the first edition of the *Religionsphilosophie*, 1878). It is doubtful, however, whether this position can be maintained. Pfleiderer himself distinctly rejects the absolute idealism of Hegel, and confines the task of the philosophy of religion to a gradual approach to truth (*Religionsphilosophie*, 2d ed. II. p. 648 sq.). Not only is his definition of religion more comprehensive than that of Hegel (*Glaubenslehre*, p. 12), but his conception of Christianity is far less abstract and *a priori*. He defines it (*Glaubenslehre*, p. 35) as “die monotheistische Erlösungsreligion, welche ihre Wurzeln in der Religion der hebräischen Propheten und ihren geschichtlichen Ursprung in der religiösen Persönlichkeit Jesu von Nazareth hat.” More specially “Das Wesen des Christentums besteht in dem durch Jesus in der Menschheit geweckten Geist der Gotteskindschaft oder der kindlichen Gottesliebe und der brüderlichen Menschenliebe” (p. 36). Cf. also his Essay on the Essence of Christianity (in *Evolution and Theology*, p. 80 sq.).

² Among the many theologians of other schools more or less influenced by the idealistic movement which culminated in Hegel may be mentioned:

Weisse, *Philosophische Dogmatik*, 3 vols. Leipzig, 1855; Rothe, *Theologische Ethik*, 5 vols. Wittenberg, 1867 sq.; Dorner, *System der christlichen Glaubenslehre*, 1867–1881, 2d ed. 2 vols. Berlin, 1886, Eng. tr. by Cave and Banks, 4 vols. Edinburgh, 1880–1882; Martensen, *Christliche Dogmatik*, 3d ed. Leipzig, 1886, Eng. tr. by Urwick, Edinburgh, 1886; Lange, *Philosophische Dogmatik*, Heidelberg, 1849, 3 vols.; Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 2d ed. Nördlingen, 2 vols.; Frank, *System der christlichen Gewissheit*, 2d ed., 2 vols., 1884; *System der christlichen Wahrheit*, 2d ed., 2 vols., 1885. Cf. also his general estimate of the newer speculative theology in his *Geschichte und Kritik der neueren Theologie*, Erlangen, 1898, chap. iii. pp. 162–196.

In the second and third quarters of the century we find a number of theologians who, while differing in other respects, are alike in this, that they all approach the study of Christianity from the speculative point of view. Not all apprehend our problem with equal clearness, nor are the philosophical premises from which they take their departure the same. Some, like Weisse and Rothe, are more closely allied in spirit to Schelling than to Hegel.¹ Others are eclectic, drawing their materials, philosophical and theological, from many sources.² Still others, standing well within the ranks of ecclesiastical orthodoxy, draw from the arsenal of the Hegelian dialectic weapons with which to defend the faith once for all delivered to the saints.³ To follow all these different lines would carry us too far afield. It will be sufficient to select a single representative, by whose example we may illustrate the nature of the influence to which we refer.

In Dorner's "Glaubenslehre" we have an excellent example of the application of the dialectic method to the problem of the definition of Christianity. Dorner is usually classed as an eclectic, and it is true that he unites in himself elements drawn from very different theological schools. But the way in which he sets up a general definition of religion, and then derives his

¹ Pünjer, II. p. 164. On Rothe, cf. also Holtzmann, *R. Rothes speculatives System*, Freiburg, 1899. More destructive tendencies are represented in the writings of Schopenhauer (cf. Pünjer, II. p. 124) and Hartmann (cf. especially his *Selbstersetzung des Christenthums und die Religion der Zukunft*, and his *Die Krisis des Christenthums in der modernen Theologie*, 1880; also Pünjer, II. p. 129 sq.).

² *E. g.* Dorner, Martensen, Lange.

³ *E. g.* Frank.

conception of Christianity as the absolute religion by analyzing this general idea into two antithetic elements of which Christianity is the higher synthesis, is truly Hegelian. To Dorner religion is the vital mutual relation of man to God and of God to man.¹ On God's side, it involves the self-revelation of His majesty and might as well as of His will; on man's the consciousness of his absolute dependence upon God and submission to His will. As on God's side the relationship consists in the impartation of God to man, so on man's it consists in a growing experience of the divine life in knowledge, freedom, and happiness. There are two great types of religion, the ethnic and the Jewish. The weakness of the former in all its forms is the failure to distinguish clearly between God and the world;² of the latter the tendency to hold the two too far apart.³ Yet the religion of Israel, through prophecy and inspiration, contains anticipations of the truth, which heathenism lacks.⁴ In Christianity, the less perfect ideals of earlier ages are transcended, and the antithesis between the two types finally overcome. "It is the higher unity and therefore the completion and end of both Judaism and heathenism alike. This is true because of what is at once its central idea and its fundamental fact, namely the absolute incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, and the resulting work of the Holy Ghost in the upbuilding

¹ *Glaubenslehre*, 2d ed. I. p. 551, § 47, Eng. tr. II. p. 114. "Die Religion ist lebendige gegenseitige Bezogenheit Gottes auf den Menschen und des Menschen auf Gott."

² § 66, I. p. 686, Eng. tr. II. p. 249.

³ § 67, I. p. 696, Eng. tr. II. p. 259.

⁴ § 68, I. p. 702, Eng. tr. II. p. 264.

of the kingdom of God.”¹ In making Christianity centre in the incarnation Dorner is in agreement with many theologians both in Germany and across the sea.²

¹ § 70, I. p. 718, Eng. tr. II. p. 280. “Das Christenthum ist die höhere Einheit und dadurch das Ende von Heidenthum und Judenthum durch seine Grundidee und Grundthatsache, die absolute Menschwerdung Gottes in Jesus Christus und das vom Gottmenschen ausgehende Werk des Heiligen Geistes zur Verwirklichung des Reiches Gottes.”

² E. g. Lange, Martensen, Frank, Hofmann, Gore, and in America, H. B. Smith, and most recently George Gordon.

Lange’s definition of Christianity is found in § 66 of his *Philosophische Dogmatik* (I. p. 463). “Der Gottmensch in seiner Vollendung, oder in dem ewigen Abschluss seiner Lebensentwicklung ist uns als die vollendete Macht, der Menschheit das gottmenschliche Leben mitzuthemen, erschienen, darum als das Christenthum selber in persönlicher Gestalt.”

Martensen (*Dogmatik*, 3d ed. p. 17, Eng. tr. p. 17). “Erst durch die Menschwerdung Gottes in Christo tritt der wahre Mittler in die Welt . . . Das Wesen des Christenthums ist daher nicht verschieden von Christo selber. Der Religionsstifter ist selber der Inhalt der Religion.”

Frank (*Christliche Wahrheit*, § 20, I. p. 286; § 27, II. p. 1 sq.). Frank regards the great process of the divine revelation to man as fulfilling itself through the three steps of generation, degeneration, and regeneration. The latter, the redemptive process, centres in the incarnation.

Hofmann (*Schriftbeweis*, I. p. 35, §§ 1-3). “Das Christenthum ist ein persönliches Verhältniss . . . Gottes und der Menschheit . . . Vermittelt ist die Liebesgemeinschaft Gottes und des Christen in dem Menschen Jesus Christus, nicht in irgend etwas von ihm, sondern in ihm selbst . . . Die so vermittelte Liebesgemeinschaft Gottes und des Christen hat zu ihrer Voraussetzung eine Gemeinschaft Gottes und Jesu Christi, welche . . . indem Verhältniss Gottes zu dem Menschen Jesus, zugleich innergöttliches Verhältniss sein muss, als jenes geworden, als dieses ewig.”

H. B. Smith (*Faith and Philosophy*, p. 134). “The yearnings of Paganism, the struggles of history, the contests of the schools, are but immature and anticipatory efforts to realize that idea of Mediation through an Incarnation, which came to its perfect embodiment in the Person of Christ. This is the archetypal idea by whose light alone we may read the spiritual history of our race.”

Gore (*Bampton Lectures for 1891 on The Incarnation*, p. 1). “Christianity is faith in a certain person Jesus Christ, and by faith in Him is meant such unreserved self-committal as is only possible because faith in

6. *Neo-Hegelianism. John and Edward Caird.*¹

Nowhere has the Hegelian point of view been applied with greater originality and skill to the interpretation of the religious life than by the two brothers Caird in Scotland. In the three volumes, "The Philosophy of Religion" by John Caird, the "Evolution of Religion" by Edward Caird, and the "Fundamental Ideas of Christianity" by John Caird, we have a discussion of the problem which now engages us, which for brilliancy and skill has not often been surpassed.² The fundamental conception of religion is the same with which we have already been made familiar, the self-revelation of the infinite to the finite, the discovery by the finite of the infinite. Religion is conceived as a unity. The several historic religions are all more or less perfect forms of the one great religion of humanity, steps in the same evolutionary process which, however far it

Jesus is understood to be faith in God, and union with Jesus union with God."

Gordon (*The New Epoch for Faith*, Boston, 1901, p. 128). "The fundamental idea of the Gospel may be stated in a sentence. The glad tidings consist in an ideal incarnation of God in the interest of a universal incarnation." Cf. p. 169: "The central truth of Christianity is the manifestation of God in Jesus Christ. The Gospel is essentially the Gospel of the incarnation."

¹ See note 1, p. 207, last paragraph.

² The three books fall naturally into place as members of a series. In the *Philosophy of Religion* by John Caird we have a discussion of the fundamental problems of religion; in the *Evolution of Religion* by Edward Caird we have a study of the historical development of religion, while in the closing book, the *Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, by John Caird, we have a development in detail of the chief conceptions of the final or absolute religion.

may seem to wander afield, in reality moves straight to a single goal.¹ On the one hand are the objective religions;² on the other hand the subjective religions.³ Between them is Christianity, the absolute religion, in which the long historic process culminates.⁴ "In Christianity religion has risen to its own true form: it, at last, is the consciousness of that spiritual principle which manifests itself in both subject and object alike, and which realizes its unity with itself through all their difference. God is now conceived of not, as in all objective religions, as a merely natural power, or as the unity of all natural powers; nor again is He conceived, as in subjective religion, as a spiritual being outside of nature and dominating over it. He is conceived as manifesting Himself alike in the whole process of nature, and in the process of spirit as it rises above nature."⁵ Because it possesses such a conception of God as this, at once immanent and transcendent, Christianity is worthy to be called the perfect religion.

Through all these various definitions one common principle runs. Christianity is the absolute religion, because the fulfilment of an ideal, already won from a study of religion as such, and brought as a standard to the interpretation and estimate of the several historic religions. Before a conception, however exalted, of

¹ *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 303 sq. The principles here briefly outlined are applied in detail in the *Evolution of Religion*.

² *E. g.* the religion of Greece. Cf. *Evolution of Religion*, I. p. 260 sq.

³ *E. g.* Buddhism and in another form, the religion of Israel. *Ibid.* I. p. 348 sq. ; p. 377 sq.

⁴ *Ibid.* II. p. 115 sq.

⁵ *Ibid.* II. p. 117.

religion as natural, this religion, with its supernatural claims, is brought to bar; to be accepted, if at all, because it conforms, and only so far as it shall prove to conform, to principles already adopted by the philosopher as commending themselves to his reason and conscience. To the Hegelian, of whatever type, Christianity is the crown of natural religion.

CHAPTER VII

RITSCHL AND HIS SCHOOL

1. *The Antecedents of the Theology of Ritschl.*¹

ONE of the most striking facts in the history of philosophy is the sudden downfall of the Hegelian system.

¹ The literature on Ritschl is large and constantly growing. Only a selection can be given here.

(a) On the life of Ritschl, cf. the biography by his son, Otto Ritschl, *Albrecht Ritschls Leben*, 2 vols. Freiburg, 1892, 1896.

(b) A full list of Ritschl's works is given in the Appendix to his biography. Those most important for our present purpose are the following: *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, 3 vols. Bonn, 1870, 1874 (2d ed. 1882, 1883; 3d ed. 1888, 1889; 4th ed. 1895, reprint of Vol. III. from 3d ed. unchanged). Vols. I. and III. have been translated into English, under the title *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* (1872, 1900); *Schleiermachers Reden über die Religion und ihre Nachwirkungen auf die evangelische Kirche Deutschlands*, Bonn, 1874; *Ueber das Gewissen. Ein Vortrag*, Bonn, 1876; *Unterricht in der christlichen Religion*, Bonn, 1875, 5th ed. 1895, Eng. tr. by Swing, in *The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl*, London and New York, 1901; *Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche*, Bonn, 1850, 2d ed. 1857; *Geschichte des Pietismus*, 3 vols. 1880, 1884, 1886; *Theologie und Metaphysik: zur Verständigung und Abwehr*, 1881, 2d ed. 1887; *Drei akademische Reden*, Bonn, 1887; *Die christliche Vollkommenheit*, Göttingen, 1874, 2d ed. 1889, Eng. tr. by Craigmile in *Bibliotheca Sacra* for 1878. *Fides implicita*, Bonn, 1890. Many of his smaller works have been collected and published in two volumes under the title, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Freiburg, 1893, 1896.

(c) On the theology of Ritschl in general, cf. Ecke, *Die theologische Schule A. Ritschls und die evang. Kirche der Gegenwart*, I. Berlin, 1897; Nippold, *Die theologische Einzelschule, im Verhältniss zur evangelischen Kirche*, Braunschweig, 1893; Schoen, *Origines Historiques de la Théologie de Ritschl*, Paris, 1893; Kattenbusch, *Von Schleiermacher zu*

From being the acknowledged leader of the intellectual forces of Europe, equally influential among theologians,

Ritschl, 2d ed. Giessen, 1893; Wegener, *A. Ritschls Idee des Reiches Gottes im Licht der Geschichte kritisch untersucht*, Leipzig, 1895; Bertrand, *Une nouvelle conception de la Rédemption*, Paris, 1891; Heer, *Der Religionsbegriff A. Ritschls*, Zürich, 1874; Mielke, *Das System A. Ritschls*, Bonn, 1894; Kügelgen, *Die Dogmatik Albrecht Ritschls*, 1898; Wendland, *Albrecht Ritschl, und seine Schüler, im Verhältnis zur Theologie, zur Philosophie und zur Frömmigkeit unsrer Zeit, dargestellt und beurtheilt*, Berlin, 1899; Pfennigsdorf, *Vergleich der dogmatischen Systeme von R. A. Lipsius und A. Ritschl*, Gotha, 1896; Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, Edinburgh, 1899; Stuckenberg, *The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl*, in *American Journal of Theology*, II. p. 268 sq.; Schwab, *A Plea for Ritschl*, *ibid.* Vol. V. p. 18 sq.; Porter, in *Andover Review* of 1893, p. 440 sq.; Swing, *The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl*, London and New York, 1901 (with a convenient bibliography of recent periodical literature).

(d) Criticisms of the Ritschlian system by Luthardt, in *Zeitschrift für kirchliche Wissenschaft und kirchliches Leben*, 1881, p. 617 sq.; 1886, p. 632 sq.; Lipsius, *Die ritschl'sche Theologie*, in *Jahr. für prot. Theol.* 1888; Pfleiderer, *Die Theologie der ritschl'schen Schule*, etc. in *Jahr. für prot. Theol.* 1891. Cf. also his *Development of Theology in Germany and Great Britain*, p. 183; Frank, *Zur Theologie A. Ritschls*, Erlangen, 1891, 3d ed.; *Der Subjectivismus in der Theologie und sein Recht*, in *Dogmatische Studien*, Leipzig, 1892, p. 27; *Geschichte und Kritik der neueren Theologie, insbesondere der systematischen, seit Schleiermacher*, Erlangen, 1898, p. 262 sq.; Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith*, New York; Denney, *Studies in Theology*, New York, 1895, chap. i.; Bruce, *Theological Agnosticism*, in *Amer. Journal of Theology*, I. p. 1 sq.; also frequent references in his *Apologetics*; Wenley, *Contemporary Theology and Theism*, 1897, p. 82 sq.; specially on Ritschl's construction of the early history of Christianity, Bois, *Le Dogme Grec*. Paris, 1893. Cf. also the literature cited by Wendland, *op. cit.* p. 1.

(e) On the philosophical basis of the theology of Ritschl, cf. Stählin, *Kant, Lotze, Albrecht Ritschl*, Leipzig, 1888, Eng. tr. by Simon, 1889; Favre, *Les Principes Philosophiques de la Théologie de Ritschl*, Vevey, 1894; Flügel, *A. Ritschls philosophische und theologische Ansichten*, 3d ed. Langensalza, 1895; Traub, *Ritschls Erkenntnistheorie*, in *Zeitschrift für Theol. und Kirche*, IV. pp. 91-129; Mackintosh, *The Ritschlian Doctrine of Theoretical and Religious Knowledge*, in *Amer. Journal of Theol.* III., p. 23. Cf. also Steinbeck, *Das Verhältnis v. Theologie und Erkenntnistheorie*, Leipzig, 1898; Scheibe, *Die Bedeutung der Werthurtheile für das*

philosophers, economists, and historians, behold our philosopher in a single generation reduced to so low an estate that in the land of his birth it is hard to find any one who calls himself a Hegelian. Many causes contributed to so strange a result. However useful broad generalization may be to the student, history cannot be written from the *a priori* principle alone. Later scholars, taking up the work where Hegel had laid it down, found that the facts would not lie content on the orderly beds on which he had placed them. For the interpretation of life other principles are needed than the logical distinction between thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. History is full of irregularities, inequalities, new beginnings, faults in the rock. It constantly brings us face to face with phenomena which no *a priori* principle can predict, which we must simply accept as we find them, whether we can account for them or no, whatever havoc they may make with our philosophic schemes. Add to this the growth of sceptical tendencies nourished upon ever-renewed study of the "Critique." These *noumena* whose existence Kant had illogically affirmed; things in themselves, real yet unattainable by reason; what are they, men began to ask, but figments of the mind, mere imaginations unworthy of the name of reality? Experience, limited and phenomenal though it be — this is the true reality, and the only reality. To interpret life in terms of the Absolute, as Hegel professed to do, is but to pour new wine into old bottles. To speak of an evolution of the

religiöse Erkennen, Halle, 1893; Otto Ritschl, *Ueber Werthurtheile*, 1895; Reischle, *Werthurtheile und Glaubensurtheile*, Halle, 1900.

Infinite, a self-realization of God, a manifestation of the divine to the human, a coming to consciousness of the Absolute, is to use words without meaning. Finite and infinite are mutually exclusive terms. Where one stops, the other begins. The Absolute can never become the object of knowledge; and to speak as if it could is to deceive oneself. Thus both theoretical and practical reasons combined to bring about the downfall of the Hegelian system, and upon the heels of an age of the most daring speculation followed a period of scepticism whose most characteristic expression is the positivism of Comte.

As is well known, the characteristic feature of the philosophy known as positivism is the rejection of the idea of the Absolute in all its forms. Through the theological and metaphysical stages, with their symbolism, more or less crude, man passes to the ripe manhood of positivism. Instead of vainly pursuing transcendent realities, he confines himself strictly within the limits of experience, and regards science as having to do solely with the description and classification of facts. Where this tendency is dominant the problem with which this essay deals is no longer recognized. The several religions are only passing phenomena of relative or temporary value, to be studied and classified according to their several concrete manifestations, but whose claim to disclose ultimate truth or give an absolute sanction to conduct may be dismissed with a smile. Holding this point of view, one may indeed see in Christianity the choicest flower of the religious life, and may seek to discover its distinctive principle in order to under-

stand wherein its superiority consists. He may find this in its more exalted conception of God as a single all-controlling principle, ruling the world in the interest of justice and truth; or he may find it in its purer ethics, with their demand upon man for humility, self-sacrifice, and brotherly service; or he may call attention to the character and life of its founder, seeing in Jesus Christ the purest and best of the sons of men, and tracing to His influence whatever of goodness or truth history may reveal in the lives of His followers. But whatever view he take; whether, in determining his estimate, abstract or concrete considerations have greater weight, to the man who holds this general point of view Christianity can never be the absolute religion.

It is in the light of a tendency such as this, prevailing far more widely and exerting an influence far more extensive than is commonly recognized, that the significance of Albrecht Ritschl is to be understood. In Ritschl we see the effort to reinstate Christianity upon the unique pedestal from which it has been cast down, without the aid of the principles used by Hegel, and by an appeal to considerations the force of which the positivist himself must recognize. Instead of seeing in Christianity with Hegel the crown of a religion of nature more or less perfectly manifesting itself wherever the religious life exists at all, he calls attention to the uniqueness of Christianity as a phenomenon without parallel. Although he lays little stress on specific miracles, Christianity is to Ritschl in a true sense a supernatural religion, for which no adequate preparation or explanation can be found in prechris-

tian history. But unlike the earlier supernaturalists of historic Christian theology, he tries to explain and defend this uniqueness by considerations truly scientific. The weapons of the Kantian philosophy which his opponents had used for the overthrow of Christianity he attempts to turn against them for their own destruction. The characteristic note of the Ritschlian theology is to be found in the union of a strong apologetic purpose, with a scientific spirit equally uncompromising.

Few men have had the advantage of a more thorough professional training than Ritschl.¹ Born in Berlin in 1822 as a minister's son — his father soon afterwards became Bishop of the Evangelical Church in Pomerania — his thoughts turned naturally to the study of theology. From Bonn, whither he had been attracted by the reputation of Nitzsch, he passed to Halle, and thence successively to Berlin, Heidelberg, and Tübingen. In the course of these years he was brought into contact with almost all the more important theological and philosophical influences of the time. At Bonn, through the influence of a fellow-student, he came under the influence of Hengstenberg. At Halle he heard not only Tholuck and Julius Müller, but also the Hegelians, Erdmann and Schaller. At Heidelberg he made the acquaintance of Rothe, at Tübingen of Baur. The final result of his student years was to

¹ For the details of Ritschl's life, see the biography by his son, Otto Ritschl (*Albrecht Ritschls Leben*, Freiburg, 1892, 1896, 2 vols.). A brief account may be found in Orr's *Ritschlian Theology*, p. 12 sq. An interesting study of Ritschl's personal characteristics is given by Ecke, *op. cit.* I. p. 13 sq.

leave him a confirmed Hegelian,¹ and he began his work as *Privat Docent* at Bonn as the acknowledged disciple and friend of Baur.² The first edition of his "History of the Old Catholic Church," published in 1850, still shows traces of the Tübingen influence.³ But the relationship was destined to be a brief one. Ritschl was not a man who could be content long to call any man master. By 1855, his relations with Baur were already strained,⁴ and with the publication of the second edition of his "Old Catholic Church," in 1857, the breach became a definitive one.⁵ From this time on he assumes an independent position, and, both as

¹ Cf. the interesting letter to his father, *Leben*, I. p. 76 sq.

² On his relations to Baur, cf. *Leben*, I. pp. 105, 112, 116, 124. His Tübingen experience proved somewhat disappointing, as his opportunities for contact with Baur proved less frequent than he had hoped. Yet at this time he reckoned himself a member of the school. Indeed he was led to apply for a position at Bonn rather than at Halle because of the difficulty experienced by men coming from Tübingen in gaining a foothold at the Prussian universities. Cf. *Leben*, p. 116.

³ Especially in its conception of the problem. Ritschl, like Baur, recognizes only two important factors to be considered in the origin of the Christian Church, Jewish Christianity and Paulinism. While he differs from Baur in the importance which he attaches to Paulinism, in which he sees the direct ancestor of the later Catholicism, the difference is no greater than that which separated other members of the school (e.g. Schweigler). Cf. *Leben*, I. p. 153 sq., and especially p. 165.

⁴ Otto Ritschl finds evidence of the growing separation as early as the first semester of his life at Bonn. Cf. *Leben*, I. pp. 122, 125, 127. The real breach came some years later. Cf. *Leben*, I. pp. 263-294, especially p. 275 sq. It was already complete before the second edition of the *Altkatholischen Kirche* appeared.

⁵ *Leben*, I. p. 286 sq. The epoch-making advance in this edition consists in the fact that Ritschl here calls attention for the first time to the determining influence exerted upon the history of the early Christian church by a Gentile Christianity quite independent of Paulinism. Cf. *Leben*, I. p. 292 sq.

teacher and writer, acquires a steadily increasing influence. From Bonn, where he had been successively promoted to be extraordinary and ordinary professor, he was called to Göttingen in 1868.¹ Here he remained until his death, gathering about him a large and constantly increasing circle of students,² and giving to the world the works upon which his fame as a theologian rests. At Göttingen he was brought into personal intimacy with Lotze,³ whose influence, as well as that of a renewed study of Schleiermacher, appears in his later writings.⁴ In 1870 appeared the first volume of his great work on "The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation," to be followed four years later by the second and third. In 1874 he published an essay on Schleiermacher's "Reden"; in the year following, the "Unterricht in der christlichen Religion" — a work designed to present the results of the Ritschlian theology in concise form for use in catechetical instruction in the schools. In 1880 appeared the first volume of his last great work on the "History of Pietism," of which the second and third volumes followed in 1884 and 1886. In a brief monograph on "Theology and Metaphysics," which he published in 1881, he explained his philosophical premises more fully, and defended himself against the attacks of

¹ *Leben*, I. p. 419.

² On Ritschl's method and success as a teacher, see *Leben*, II. pp. 56, 141. In his early years his lectures were not largely attended (I. p. 268), but before his death no teacher in Germany had a larger or more enthusiastic circle of pupils. Cf. II. p. 261.

³ On his relations to Lotze, cf. *Leben*, II. p. 376. At an earlier time he had studied the *Mikrokosmos* with great delight (*Leben*, II. p. 20).

⁴ *Leben*, II. p. 244 sq.

which he had already frequently been made the subject. Other minor works, while amplifying and confirming his position in detail, need not concern us here.¹ He died in Göttingen on the 20th of March, 1889.

In Ritschl German theology returns to the path which had been marked out for it by Schleiermacher, but from which it had been diverted for the time by the more ambitious programme of the Hegelian speculation. Ritschl himself speaks in differing terms of Schleiermacher, now acknowledging his greatness, and expressing his own personal indebtedness to him for suggestions as to method,² again referring to him disparagingly as a greatly overrated man.³ There can be

¹ See p. 223, note 1 (b).

² *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 54. "Nun ist die Thatsache die, dass Schleiermacher zwar diese aus seiner herrnhutischen Vergangenheit ihm gelaufigen Formeln (*i. e.* that of "eine persönliche and dabei realen Geistesvereinigung zwischen Gott und dem Gläubigen) gebraucht, sie aber auf die *Wirkungen* undeutet, welche vom Erlöser sich auf den Gläubigen in der Kirche erstrecken. Ferner analysirt Schleiermacher alle hier einschlagenden Verhältnisse im Rahmen des subjectiven Lebens. Er ist also in Hinsicht auf der Methode mein Vorgänger; ich habe meine Methode von ihm gelernt, zum andern Theil von Schneckenburger." Ritschl speaks with special approval of Schleiermacher's emphasis of the social elements in religion (*Recht. und Vers.* I. p. 488, Eng., tr. p. 444), and his application of the ethical conception of the "highest good" to theological problems (*Leben*, II. p. 84). In the latter his influence was epoch making, but unfortunately Schleiermacher did not carry through his own idea consistently, and his followers have misunderstood him, and found the characteristic feature of his teaching in his emphasis upon the individual religious experience. This mystical conception of religion is part of Schleiermacher's inheritance from Spinoza and the weakest part of his system (*Leben*, II. p. 107). Cf. *Recht. u. Vers.* III. p. 29, Eng. tr. p. 29.

³ In Vol. I. of the *Rechtfertigung*, p. 484 sq. he denies that Schleiermacher's influence in modern theology is really as far reaching as many assume. In matters of method (als Gesetzgeber) he is ready to grant that

no doubt that the former estimate more justly represents the true relation between the two men. It is characteristic of Schleiermacher, as we have seen, that he takes his departure from the Christian experience, and seeks to understand Christianity as a historic phenomenon, from the point of view of the Christian church. To construct Christianity *a priori*, or to prove its authority from grounds of universal reason is far from his intention. Such a procedure would be to do injustice to the sovereignty of the religious feeling, which is its own sufficient evidence. To Schleiermacher, therefore, theology is a positive science, as truly as physics or botany, having its subject-matter given to it in experience, and its only duty is to describe exhaustively and define accurately what it finds. In this point of view Ritschl is in hearty accord with Schleiermacher. In rejecting the *a priori* dialectic of the Hegelian, and taking his stand within the Christian experience, he is conscious of dependence upon the older theologian, and his only quarrel with Schleiermacher is over the fact that the latter has not always been true to his own premises.¹

his influence is dominant and that all must learn from him (p. 486), but so far as the positive content of his theology is concerned he denies that a new epoch begins with him. In a letter to Diestel (*Leben*, II. p. 83), he maintains that the first condition of understanding Schleiermacher is the cessation of the unreasoning admiration with which he has hitherto been regarded. Still later, writing to his son (*Leben*, II. p. 248) about a point in the interpretation of Schleiermacher on which they had differed, he admits that the latter is probably right, but adds that the recognition would only have increased "meine allgemeine Abgeneigtheit gegen Schleiermacher." Cf. II. p. 85, "der Abschnitt über Schleiermacher, den ich mit grossem Widerwillen ausgearbeitet habe," etc.

¹ *Schleiermachers Reden*, p. 46. "Also in dem Gemeinbegriff der

But if Ritschl agrees with Schleiermacher in taking his departure from the Christian experience, he differs with him in his view of the nature of that experience. There is about Schleiermacher's doctrine a taint of subjectivism which is repugnant to the younger theologian. Ritschl comes to theology from the study of history, and this earlier training gives to his work as a theologian an ideal of objectivity which the theology of Schleiermacher lacks. To Ritschl, Christianity is not simply a matter of feelings and emotions, however exalted. It exists apart from the individual, as an objective reality in history, and the peculiar characteristic of the Christian experience, as distinct from that of the mystic, is that the former is called into being only through contact with this specific reality. The great duty of the theologian, therefore, is to discover, and to define as accurately as he can, what is the particular fact in history which calls forth the distinctively Christian experience.¹ This is the task which Ritschl

Religion, welchen Schleiermacher aufstellt, durchkreuzten sich in unverträglicher Weise Elemente des Heidenthums und des Christenthums." Cf. *Leben*, II. p. 83, "die Handhabung der unterchristlichen Gedankenreihen;" also *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 9, Eng. tr. p. 9. His view of Christianity is "constantly crossed by the neutral idea of religion by which he is guided."

¹ Kattenbusch, in his interesting comparison between Schleiermacher and Ritschl (*Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl*, 2d ed. p. 72 sq.) finds the distinctive feature (den springenden Punkt) in Ritschl's system in the fact that he takes his departure, not from the religious consciousness (vom frommen Bewusstsein) but from the Gospel. In this his method reverses that of Schleiermacher. "Die Dogmatik ist für ihn nicht Schilderung oder Ausdeutung eines *Thatbestandes* von Frömmigkeit innerhalb der christlichen Gemeinde, sondern Nachweis und möglichst vollständige Entfaltung der *Norm* aller Frömmigkeit in der christlichen Kirche. . . . Er ist regiert von dem Gedanken, dass es eine Glaubensgehorsam giebt und

sets himself in his "History of the Old Catholic Church," a work in which the reign of Hegelianism in church history was definitely broken, and Christianity presented for the first time in its historic uniqueness and originality, as distinct both from the non-Christian religions before it, and the Greek philosophical ideas with which it was later mistakenly confused.¹

But we have not fully expressed Ritschl's difference from Schleiermacher when we have called attention to the more objective nature of his construction of Christianity. His conception of the Christian experience

dass die Dogmatik nach der Offenbarung Gottes in Christo angiebt, worauf sich der Glaubensgehorsam zu beziehen hat," etc. (p. 75).

Cf. Reischle ("Der Streit," etc. in *Zeitschrift für Theol. und Kirche*, 1897, p. 174): "Wenn wir uns aber fragen, wodurch vor allem uns einst seine Theologie gepackt, was uns eine Befreiung aus dem Bann einer Dogmatik wie der Biedermannschen gebracht hat, so werden wir sagen müssen: es war ganz wesentlich die energische Hinleitung auf die uns erkennbare, Vertrauen erweckende Persönlichkeit Jesu Christi."

On the other hand, Wendland (*Albrecht Ritschl*, etc. p. 77) objects that this judgment is wholly misleading, since as a matter of fact Ritschl's point of departure is just as subjective as that of Schleiermacher himself. It would have been a theological expression of Ritschl's theory of the *Werthurtheil*, had Ritschl declared that the subjective experience of the dogmatician were the highest dogmatic principle. "Denn diese bildet im Verein mit dem vernünftigen und sittlichen Beurtheilungsvermögen tatsächlich bei allen Dogmatikern und so auch bei Ritschl den kritischen Massstab, nach dem die biblische Verkündigung gewertet wird," p. 78. Cf. also Orr, *op. cit.* pp. 48, 49.

The two views are not really inconsistent. Ritschl is at one with Schleiermacher in insisting that all theology has to do with subjective experiences. Cf. *Theol. und Metaphysik*, p. 54; *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 1, Eng. tr. p. 1. But he differs from him in the energy with which he emphasizes the fact that the Christian experience is called forth by a certain definite object, and the clearness with which he tries to define the nature of that object. This, as we shall see later, is the key to much that is otherwise difficult to understand in his theology.

¹ *Leben*, I. p. 292 sq. "Nun hat aber," etc.

itself is different. It is not so much an experience of dependence as of freedom. In contrast to the emotional elements emphasized by Schleiermacher, and the intellectual elements made prominent by Hegel, Ritschl, following Kant,¹ insists upon the ethical elements in the Christian experience.² To be a Christian means to live a life of active devotion and service to God. This will appear more clearly as we consider his view of religion in detail.

2. *Ritschl's View of Religion.*³

To Ritschl, religion is above all a practical matter.⁴ It is neither knowledge, nor feeling, but power. It is

¹ *Recht. und Vers.* I. p. 489, Eng. tr. p. 445. "Man kann also Schleiermacher als den Führer der Theologie unseres Jahrhunderts nur so anerkennen dass man zugleich Kant in dieselbe Stellung zulässt." Cf. also III. p. 11, Eng. tr. p. 11.

² We have already seen that Ritschl regards it as Schleiermacher's most valuable contribution to theology that he applied to theology the ethical concept of the "highest good." *Leben*, II. p. 84. Cf. *Recht. und Vers.* I. p. 490 sq., Eng. tr. p. 446 sq. His chief fault is to be found in the fact, that, having once grasped the true idea, he failed to carry it out consistently. "Obgleich nun Schleiermachers Definition des Christenthums diesen Gedanken (*i. e.* of the kingdom of God) andeutet, so is er schon dadurch verspielt, dass er sagt, dass alles im Christenthum auf die Erlösung durch Christus bezogen ist, ohne zugleich zu sagen, dass diese wieder auf den Zweck des sittlichen Gottesreiches bezogen ist, und dies fehlt ja auch bekanntlich in der Durchführung der Glaubenslehre gänzlich." *Leben*, II. p. 107. Cf. also *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 11, Eng. tr. p. 11. "Kant was the first to perceive the supreme importance for ethics of the 'kingdom of God' as an association of men bound together by laws of virtue. But it remained for Schleiermacher first to employ the true conception of the teleological nature of the kingdom of God to determine the idea of Christianity. This service of his ought never to be forgotten, even if he failed to grasp the discovery with a firm hand."

³ For Ritschl's view of religion, cf. *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 184 sq., Eng. tr. p. 193 sq. Cf. also p. 17 sq., Eng. tr. p. 17 sq.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 186, Eng. tr. p. 195. "Now we have no difficulty in ascer-

the means through which man, bound under the iron law of nature, feeling himself, both in his inner and his outer life, a slave to forces from whose blind necessity he cannot escape, passions which he cannot control, mysteries which he cannot resolve, is delivered from this tyranny, and introduced into the realm of freedom where alone he can realize his true destiny.¹ To Ritschl as truly as to Paul a previous experience of helplessness and of guilt is a prerequisite to the understanding of true religion. This is what he means by calling God a *Werthurtheil*, a judgment of worth.²

taining by an examination of all other religions, that the secular knowledge which they involve is not disinterestedly theoretical, but guided by practical ends."

¹ *Ibid.* p. 189, Eng. tr. p. 199. "In every religion what is sought, with the help of the supernatural spiritual power revered by man, is a solution of the contradiction in which man finds himself, as both a part of the world of nature and a spiritual personality claiming to dominate nature. For in the former rôle he is a part of nature, dependent upon her, subject to, and confined by other things; but as spirit he is moved by the impulse to maintain his independence against them. In this juncture, religion springs up as faith in superhuman spiritual powers, by whose help the power which man possesses of himself is in some way supplemented, and elevated into a unity of its own kind which is a match for the pressure of the natural world." Cf. p. 17, Eng. tr. p. 17. "The religious view of the world, in all its species, rests on the fact that man in some degree distinguishes himself in worth from the phenomena which surround him and from the influences of nature which press in upon him. All religion is equivalent to an explanation of the course of the world . . . in the sense that the sublime spiritual powers (or the spiritual power) which rule in or over it, conserve and confirm to the personal spirit its claims and its independence over against the restrictions of nature and the natural effects of human society."

² *Ibid.* p. 202, Eng. tr. p. 212. "Knowledge of God can be demonstrated as religious knowledge only when He is conceived as securing to the believer such a position in the world as more than counterbalances its restrictions. Apart from this value-judgment of faith there exists no knowledge of God worthy of this content."

Not, of course, as some careless critics have misinterpreted him to mean, as though God were a mere imagination, invented by man in his need to console himself with the dream of deliverance — of whatever faults Ritschl may be guilty, he is not the author of such shallowness as this¹ — but that the prime significance of God, as He reveals Himself in the religious life, lies in the fact that He, and He alone, has both the power and the will to provide the deliverance without which man must be helpless. God is not a mere philosophic conception, to whose truth or falsehood the religious man can be indifferent. He is a reality intensely practical; a power making Himself felt in helpfulness, and who, if He did not so help, would not be God. The qualities which the philosophers have grouped together under the head of absoluteness, infinity, eternity, impassibility, aseity, incomprehensibility and the rest, are of all others the most indifferent to the religious consciousness. Whether God be, metaphysically speaking, absolute or not is a matter of trifling importance, provided He delivers man from his sorrows and saves him from his sins.²

But we shall not fully understand Ritschl's view of religion till we take into account the nature of the life which is the result of this deliverance. It is a life which is intensely ethical. Salvation is in order to service. Men are not isolated individuals, existing apart from one another, so that their relationship to

¹ Cf. Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 186 sq.; p. 267.

² On Ritschl's view of the traditional conception of God, cf. *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 215 sq., Eng. tr. p. 226 sq.

God can be determined without regard to their relationship to one another.¹ They are members of society, brothered with their fellow men in duty and in responsibility. No small part of the misery of life comes from the fact that they fail to fulfil the duties involved in such relationship. It is the glory of religion that it lifts men above their weaknesses and limitations, and enables them to realize the ethical obligations imposed upon them by their station in life.

Accordingly we find Ritschl laying stress upon the active elements in the religious life. The religious man is not merely the servant of God. He is the man who through God has obtained the mastery over the world.² Whereas once he felt himself too weak to withstand the forces which oppose him, now he is conscious of power to overcome them, and through the divine strength to realize the ethical ideal which, apart from such help, had been impossible of attain-

¹ *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 196, Eng. tr. p. 206. "An interest in salvation in the Christian sense, when rightly understood, is incompatible with egoism. Egoism is a revolt against the common tasks of action. Now, people might say that faith in God for our salvation, and a dutiful public spirit towards our fellows, have nothing to do with one another, and that therefore there is no conceivable reason why religion, as a rule, should not be egoistic. But in Christianity precisely faith in God and moral duty within the kingdom of God are related to one another. As a rule, therefore, it is impossible that Christian faith in God should be egoistic."

² *Ibid.* p. 195, Eng. tr. p. 205. "Religious knowledge moves in independent value-judgments, which relate to man's attitude to the world, and call forth feelings of pleasure or pain, in which man either enjoys the dominion over the world vouchsafed him by God, or feels grievously the lack of God's help to that end." Cf. p. 201, Eng. tr. p. 212; and especially p. 217, Eng. tr. p. 228, "God as a Person, who establishes the kingdom of God as the final end of the world, and in it assures to every one who trusts in Him supremacy over the world."

ment. Here we have the Kantian thought of religion as the practical postulate of the ethical life reaffirmed in a form less abstract and more true to the Christian experience.¹

This combination of religion and ethics is determinative for Ritschl's thought of Christianity. It explains his definition and gives the framework in which it is cast.² It is indeed from a study of Christianity that he is led to adopt this particular view of religion. Unlike Schleiermacher and Hegel, who construct a general definition of religion on the basis of the universal religious experience, and then endeavor more particularly to define Christianity as a particular species within the genus, he maintains that it is impossible to construct an adequate definition of religion apart from Christianity.³

¹ Ritschl resents the charge that he, "like Kant in his *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason*, makes religion a subordinate appendix to morals." On the contrary, he maintains that "his mode of doctrine shows the very opposite." *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 215, note, Eng. tr. p. 226. On his view of Kant, cf. Vol. I. §§ 56-58.

² Cf. the celebrated simile of the ellipse. *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 11, Eng. tr. p. 11. "But Christianity, so to speak, resembles not a circle described from a single centre, but an ellipse which is determined by two foci (*i. e.* the religious conception of redemption, and the ethical conception of the kingdom of God)." Elsewhere he mentions three points, God, man, and the world. Cf. *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 29, Eng. tr. p. 29.

On Ritschl's refusal to derive the dogmatic system from a single constitutive principle, cf. Otto Ritschl, *Leben*, II. p. 184.

³ *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 185, Eng. tr. p. 194. The task (of formulating "a universal conception of religion under which all the particular species of religion may find their peculiar features determined) involves no slight difficulties, and contributes less to the understanding of Christianity than is often expected." Ritschl's own definition "makes no claim to be a definition proper of the generic conception of religion. It is too definite for that. The ideas which it employs — God, world, blessedness — have so directly Christian a stamp that they apply to other religions only in comparative degree."

Christianity is not a species within a broader genus; it belongs to a class by itself. Instead of approaching Christianity with our preconceived notion of religion, we should study Christianity to find out what true religion is.¹ Only after such study are we in a position to attempt a general definition, and then always with the qualification, that it represents rather the ideal to which man is some day to attain, than the description of that which, apart from Christianity, is actually his experience.² In defining religion as he does, Ritschl means to affirm that mastery over the world through dependence upon God is, as a matter of fact, the distinguishing characteristic of the Christian experience.³

3. *Ritschl's Definition of Christianity.*

Ritschl's fullest definition of Christianity is given in the introduction to the third volume of his "Justification

¹ To be sure he does not deny that a study of the history of religions may help us to the understanding of Christianity by establishing a standard of comparison. On the contrary, such study is of the highest value. "The specifically peculiar nature of Christianity, which at every turn of theology must be kept intact, can be ascertained only by calling the general history of religion to our aid" (*Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 9, Eng. tr. p. 8. Cf. p. 186, Eng. tr. p. 196). But a general conception of religion must be used with the greatest care. It can have only regulative, not constitutive, value. If it make one "even for a moment neutral towards the Christian religion itself, in order to be able to deduce its meaning from the conditions of the general conception," the only effect will be "to undermine Christian conviction" (p. 187). A regulative use, however, is attended by no such dangers. Cf. the whole passage, p. 186 sq., Eng. tr. p. 196 sq.

² *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 185, Eng. tr. p. 195. To apply it properly, "we should have to specify at the same time the different modifications" which the distinctively Christian ideas undergo in other religions.

³ Compare III. p. 217, Eng. tr. p. 228, with pp. 195, 202, Eng. tr. pp. 205, 212.

and Reconciliation.”¹ “Christianity,” he tells us, “is the monotheistic, completely spiritual, and ethical religion, which, based on the life of its author as Redeemer and as founder of the kingdom of God, consists in the freedom of the children of God, involves the impulse to conduct from the motive of love, aims at the moral organization of mankind, and grounds blessedness on the relation of sonship to God, as well as on the kingdom of God.” In this definition the influence of Schleiermacher is clearly evident. Like Schleiermacher, Ritschl sees in Christianity at once a monotheistic, a teleological (*i. e.* spiritual and ethical) and a redemptive religion; to him as to Schleiermacher its distinctive features centre about the person and work of its

¹ *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 13, Eng. tr. p. 13. With this should be compared the definition in the *Unterricht*, § 2 “Das Christenthum ist von dem Anspruch erfüllt, die vollkommene Religion über den anderen Arten und Stufen derselben zu sein, welche dem Menschen dasjenige leistet, was in allen anderen Religionen zwar erstrebt wird, aber nur undeutlich oder unvollständig vorschwebt. Diejenige Religion ist die vollkommene, in welche die vollkommene Erkenntniss Gottes möglich ist. Diese nun behauptet das Christenthum von sich, indem seine Gemeinde sich von Jesus Christus ableitet, der als Gottes Sohn sich die vollkommene Erkenntniss seines Vaters zuschreibt, und indem sie ihre Erkenntniss Gottes aus demselben Geiste Gottes ableitet, in welchem Gott selbst sich erkennt. Diese Bedingungen des Bestandes der christlichen Religion sind angedeutet, indem wir getauft werden auf den Namen Gottes als des Vaters, des Sohnes, und des heiligen Geistes.”

In this passage Christianity is contrasted as the perfect religion with the various imperfect stages of which it claims to be the fulfilment. It is clear, therefore, that Ritschl's refusal to determine the nature of Christianity by a general conception of religion *a priori*, is not intended to deny a real teleological connection between Christianity and other less developed forms of faith. His contention is merely that the true standard of comparison can only be gained as one takes his stand within the Christian community, and surveys the history of religion from this vantage ground. Cf. *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 186, Eng. tr. p. 196.

founder. But in the development of these ideas he differs from the elder theologian at several points. Not only does he include in his definition elements not present in that of Schleiermacher¹ (*e. g.* the kingdom of God; the ethical vocation of the Christian), but in his treatment of ideas which they hold in common he goes a way of his own. We may illustrate the points of difference by reference to the ideas of the kingdom of God, of redemption, and of Jesus Christ.

1. Characteristic of Ritschl is his emphasis of the social aspect of Christianity. The object of Christ's salvation is not the deliverance of individuals merely, but the creation of a righteous society; the organization of humanity itself according to those principles of divine sonship and brotherly love which in His own person He had uniquely illustrated.² To Schleiermacher, also, Christianity is a social religion. He begins his "Glaubenslehre" with a definition of the religious society or the church. But the place occupied by this idea in the structure of his thought is less fundamental than is the case with Ritschl. To Schleiermacher the individual is primary, the society secondary.³

¹ Save as they are implied in the use of the word teleological.

² *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 10, Eng. tr. p. 10. "In Christianity, the kingdom of God is represented as the common end of God and the elect community, in such a way that it rises above the natural limits of nationality and becomes the moral society of nations." Cf. also *Unterricht* § 5, "Das Reich Gottes ist das von Gott gewährleistete höchste Gut der durch seine Offenbarung in Christus gestifteten Gemeinde."

³ Ritschl explains this as due to the mystic idea of religion which Schleiermacher shares with the older theology. In this conception the world occupies a subordinate place, and hence the ethical ideal of mastery over the world, which is an essentially social conception, does not receive the prominence it deserves. Cf. *Recht und Vers.* III. p. 29, Eng. tr. p. 29.

Religion is the outgrowth of the feeling of individual dependence upon God, and churches are simply groups of individuals who share similar experiences.¹ To Ritschl, on the other hand, the society is primary, the individual secondary.² Christ came to found a church, in order that through it individuals might enter into an experience of salvation possible in no other way. Thus to Ritschl it is the kingdom as such, and not the units which compose it, which is the subject of the divine promises. It is the church which possesses forgiveness, justification, freedom, sonship. The only way for the individual to attain these graces is to become a member of the Christian community.³ This explains the promi-

"(Schleiermacher's) interpretation of religion as the feeling of absolute dependence on God, involves in its intention the complete neutrality of both factors towards the world. . . . Only in a secondary way is the world brought into relation to the religious faculty," etc.

¹ To be sure Schleiermacher recognizes clearly "dass das geistige, religiöse, sittliche Leben, dessen individuelle Form er zugleich mit der genauesten Beobachtung festgestellt hat, überhaupt nicht ausser der entsprechenden Gemeinschaft gedacht werden kann, und dass in der Wechselwirkung mit ihr das Individuum seine eigenthümliche Entwicklung findet." *Recht. und Vers.* I. p. 487, Eng. tr. p. 443. But to Schleiermacher the nature and extent of a man's social relations are determined by his individual feeling and taste. The great conception of the organization of humanity as such for a single moral end does not appear in his *Reden* as a religious conception. It is this lack which Ritschl seeks to supply.

² This appears in the structure of his system. In the *Unterricht*, which is the nearest approach which we have to a systematic theology, he begins at once with the idea of the kingdom of God (§ 5). Cf. also *Recht. und Vers.* III. pp. 10, 30, Eng. tr. pp. 10, 30.

³ *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 132, Eng. tr. p. 139. "Justification or reconciliation, as positively connected with the historical manifestation and activity of Christ, is related in the first instance to the whole of the religious community founded by Christ, which maintains the Gospel of God's grace in Christ as the direct means of its existence, and to individuals only as they attach themselves, by faith in the Gospel, to this community." Cf. pp. 104 sq., 30, 544, Eng. tr. pp. 108 sq., 30, 577.

ment place given in Ritschl's theology to the kingdom of God.

To Ritschl the kingdom of God has a double significance, at once religious and ethical. It is a religious conception, "since it is the *summum bonum* which God realizes in men."¹ It is an ethical conception, since it is at the same time the "common task" which God requires men to achieve through obedience.² The two meanings, while logically separable, are in fact "interdependent," and the Christian ideal realizes itself only through a union of the two. According to Ritschl, it is Schleiermacher's greatest fault that he failed to perceive this, and hence in his "Glaubenslehre" isolated such religious conceptions as justification and reconciliation from their proper social and ethical environment.³ This fault Ritschl endeavors to correct in his great monograph on "Justification and Reconciliation." We need to remember this as we approach his doctrine of redemption.⁴

2. We may express the difference between Schleiermacher and Ritschl at this point by saying that, whereas, to the former, redemption exhausts itself in bringing about the proper relation between the individual soul and God, to the latter, it is the means to a wider end, namely, the establishment of the ethical

¹ *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 30, Eng. tr. p. 30.

² *Ibid.*

³ Cf. the detailed criticism of Schleiermacher's doctrine of redemption in *Recht. und Vers.* I. p. 518 sq., Eng. tr. p. 473, also the passage already cited from the *Leben*, II. p. 107.

⁴ On Ritschl's doctrine of redemption, cf. *Recht. und Vers.* III. chaps. i. ii. vii. viii. *Unterricht*, §§ 26-45. Here we are concerned only with the general outlines of the conception, not with its development in detail.

kingdom of God, which is the supreme object both for God and man. To Schleiermacher, the fundamental religious fact is the feeling of dependence upon God. Wherever that is found, there you have the essence of religion. Redemption is one particular form among others in which this dependence appears. The secondary place assigned to the conception appears in the structure of the "Glaubenslehre," which begins with man's dependence upon God as revealed in nature, and then passes on to consider the modifications of the religious feeling brought about by sin and by salvation. To Ritschl, on the other hand, redemption is the fundamental religious fact. Without redemption — that is, deliverance from the evils to which man is exposed — you simply cannot have religion as he understands it. Schleiermacher is a monist, who sees God in everything, to whom evil is something relative, subsidiary, passing. Ritschl is a dualist, face to face with the fact of present evil, to whom unity is an ideal still to be realized, a task still to be achieved. By the extent of our present need, we measure the greatness of our obligation to Christ.

3. With the mention of Christ we reach our third point of contrast. To both Ritschl and Schleiermacher Christ is the central figure of Christianity. To both, his person and work have fundamental importance. Apart from Him Christianity would never have existed. Nevertheless, in their estimate of what Christ actually does and is, they differ. To Ritschl the work of Christ appears a more unique and original thing than to Schleiermacher. We may express the difference be-

tween the two by returning to our earlier contrast between Paul and the writer to the Hebrews. To Schleiermacher, as to the writer to the Hebrews, the significance of Christ consists in the fact that he completes a work already begun, realizes an ideal already partially revealed. To Ritschl, as to Paul, Christ is the beginning of a new line of development, source of a power and influence entirely without parallel.¹ With

¹ *Unterricht* § 19. "Die Aufgabe der sittlichen Verbindung aller Menschen als Menschen konnte als praktischer Grundsatz nur wirksam werden, indem sie aus dem religiösen Beweggrunde der besondern christlichen Gemeinde erzeugt worden ist. Da ferner jene Aufgabe über alle natürlich bedingten sittlichen Motive sich erhebt, so findet ihre Geltung in der christlichen Gemeinde ihren nothwendigen Massstab an dem in §§ 11-18 entwickelten Gedanken des übernatürlichen Gottes. Nun ist aber auch die besondere Thatsache der Gemeinde, welche sich zu der Verwirklichung jener allgemeinen Aufgabe als des Reiches Gottes bestimmt, nicht naturgemäss gegeben, sondern dieselbe ist in ihrer Art immer nur als die positive Stiftung Christi begreiflich. Deshalb ist es zum Verständniss dieser Gemeinde und für unsere richtige Theilnahme an derselben nothwendig, das bleibendes Verhältniss anzuerkennen und zu verstehen, welches zwischen der Gemeinde des Reiches Gottes und ihrem Stifter Jesus Christus obwaltet."

After speaking of the relation in which Christ stands to the Old Testament prophets, he goes on to speak of the qualities which fit Him for His work. These are first, His fitness in character for the work to which He was called (§ 21); secondly, His adoption as His own of God's plan for the world (§ 22); and thirdly, His actual mastery over the world as a result of His union with the supermundane God (§ 23). These qualities we express in the confession of the divinity of Christ, which is to be understood not theoretically, as a metaphysical judgment, but as a *Werthurtheil*, expressive of the experience which we have actually enjoyed of Christ's deliverance. Cf. *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 376, Eng. tr. p. 398.

The unique place held by Christ in the Christian religion is most clearly expressed in the Christian name of God, which, according to Ritschl, is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Unterricht*, § 11). Cf. also his criticism of the attempts to write the life of Jesus, on the ground that the "very undertaking involves the surrender of the conviction that Jesus, as the founder of the perfect moral and spiritual relig-

the single exception of the Old Testament, which so belongs with Christianity that Ritschl practically identifies it with it,¹ the religious preparation of the world before Christ came was almost wholly negative. Redemption, as the Christian knows it, as the church exemplifies it, was unknown before Christ. Thus to Ritschl, Christianity stands forth as a phenomenon without parallel; a religion truly supernatural in the midst of a world elsewhere the subject of uniform law.

We touch here a point which is characteristic of Ritschl's theology, namely, his rejection of natural theology in every form.² Ritschl has small respect for the efforts to prepare the way for Christianity by reference to a preceding religion of nature. He sees in them simply relics of a paganism from which it is the first duty of the Christian theologian to free himself. In this view he had been anticipated by Schleiermacher, who devotes more than one page of his "Reden" to clever satire of the so-called religion of nature, which has its existence only in the brains of certain rationalistic philosophers and theologians.³ But it is not merely such artificial and exotic plants that Ritschl has in

ion, belongs to a higher order than all other men" (*Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 3, Eng. tr. p. 3). He is unique, not merely *a parte ante*, but *a parte post*.

The view thus briefly indicated is fully developed in *Recht. und Vers.* III. chap. vi.

¹ See below, p. 249.

² *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 8, Eng. tr. p. 8. "If any one builds Christian theology on a substructure of pretended natural theology . . . he thereby takes his stand outside the sphere of regeneration, which is coterminous with the community of believers."

³ Cf. p. 164, note 2.

mind. His antagonism extends to every attempt to lay a rational basis for Christianity in considerations that are independent of the distinctively Christian experience. While it is true that "the theological exposition of Christianity" is complete only "when it has been demonstrated that the Christian ideal of life, and no other, satisfies the claims of the human spirit to knowledge of things universally,"¹ it is also true that this demonstration is impossible on purely speculative grounds. The true proof of Christianity, and the only one that can claim scientific validity, is the Christian experience.² This explains Ritschl's rejection of the famous arguments for the being of God.³ These are as unsatisfactory religiously as they are scientifically. Taking their departure outside of the Christian experience, they are unable to lead to the desired conclusion. The God they prove is not the God in whom Christians believe. Even the study of comparative religion falls short of scientific demonstration.⁴ How will you prove to a Mohammedan or a Buddhist who knows not Christ the superiority of the Christian religion?⁵ He lacks

¹ *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 25, Eng. tr. p. 25.

² *Ibid.* p. 24, Eng. tr. p. 24. "The scientific proof for the truth of Christianity ought only to be sought in the line of the thought already singled out by Spener: "Whosoever willeth to do the will of God will know that the doctrine of Christ is true."

³ *Ibid.* p. 201, Eng. tr. p. 211 sq. The only argument to which Ritschl grants any validity is the moral argument. To this, when properly stated, he attributes great weight. Cf. p. 208 sq., Eng. tr. p. 219 sq.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 186 sq., Eng. tr. p. 196 sq.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 187 sq., Eng. tr. p. 197. "It is aimless and impracticable to attempt to prove the universal validity of the view that religions can be arranged in an ascending series. Do people expect to discover thus a way of demonstrating scientifically to a Mohammedan or a Buddhist that

the premise on which your argument rests. Thus natural theology, in both its great historic forms, breaks down. Christianity is something wholly *sui generis*, and the attempt to prepare the way for its understanding by an appeal to general considerations outside of itself is bound to fail.

In view of this attitude toward natural theology, it is all the more striking that we find our author taking such conservative ground as to the Old Testament religion.¹ For all his sense of the uniqueness and originality of Christ, he cannot conceal from himself the fact that Christianity is deeply embedded in the soil of the religion of Israel. He blames Schleiermacher for exaggerating the contrast between Christianity and Judaism.² They are not two separate religions, but different parts of one and the same religion. Christianity is the flower of which the religion of Israel is the root.³ Christ Himself professed to be the Messiah of whom the prophets spake, and fed His spirit upon the devotional literature in which His disciples later found His own experiences anticipated.⁴ In binding

the Christian religion, and not theirs, occupies the highest rank? In carrying out the task we have indicated, we have no such aim."

¹ *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 10, Eng. tr. p. 9. "In the Old Testament, no less (than in Christianity), the concrete conception of the one, supernatural, omnipotent God is bound up with the final end of the kingdom of God and with the idea of a redemption."

² *Ibid.* Schleiermacher was impeded in his estimate of Christianity "by his underestimate of the religion of the Old Testament, which, as the stage prefatory to Christianity, is possessed of characteristics analogous to those of Christianity itself."

³ *Ibid.* p. 10, Eng. tr. p. 10. In Christianity we have "a culmination of the monotheistic, spiritual, and teleological religion of the Bible in the idea of the perfected spiritual and moral religion."

⁴ *Unterricht*, § 20.

up the Old Testament with the New as parts of a single volume of revelation the church has followed a sound instinct, which modern critical study only tends to confirm.¹

But Ritschl is not merely anxious to establish the originality and distinctness of Christianity as a historic religion, as compared with the so-called religions of nature. He is also careful to discriminate it from the various forces and influences with which in its later history it has been wrongly identified.² Foremost among these is Greek philosophy, with its conception of God as absolute Substance instead of loving Father, and its substitution, for the historic Christ, of the Logos of the Alexandrine schools.³ The translation of Christian truth into the technical language of the philosophers, and the substitution for personal faith in Christ of the acceptance of certain abstruse metaphysical dogmas, was a corruption of Christianity which was none the less unfortunate because it was inevitable. Christianity is life, not dogma. It is deliverance from the bondage of the world into the freedom of sonship through the redemption of Christ. Any theological statement which obscures this simple fact of experience is to be deprecated. One of the most important tasks

¹ *Unterricht*, § 3.

² *Ibid.* § 3. "Weil aber im Laufe der Geschichte," etc.

³ This view, suggested by Ritschl in his *Altkatholischen Kirche*, has been most fully developed by Kaftan and Harnack. Ritschl himself accepts the Johannine designation of Christ as the Logos, though giving it a religious rather than a metaphysical interpretation (*Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 382, Eng. tr. p. 404). His fullest criticism of the idea of the Absolute is given in *Theol. und Metaphysik*, p. 17 sq. Cf. *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 215, Eng. tr. p. 226.

for any age is to recover the core of essential Christianity from the heap of rubbish, ecclesiastical and intellectual, under which it has been buried.

While thus seeking to recover the core of historic Christianity, its Gospel as distinct from its theologies and its dogmas, Ritschl is far from ignoring the experience of the church. Unlike some later theologians, whose cry, "Back to Christ," means the rejection of historic Christianity in all its forms, for the impossible effort to reproduce the conditions which prevailed during the life of its founder, he recognizes clearly that we can know Christ only through the effects which He produces upon men. Hence the experience of those who testify to having been redeemed through Christ becomes of the highest value.¹ We learn of Christ

¹ *Recht. und Vers.* III. pp. 1-3, Eng. tr. pp. 1-3. "Now it is not sufficient for my purpose to bring out what Jesus has said about the forgiveness of sins attached to His person and His death. For even if His statements might seem perfectly clear, their significance becomes completely intelligible only when we see how they are reflected in the consciousness of those who believe in Him, and how the members of the Christian community trace back their consciousness of pardon to the person and the action and passion of Jesus. . . . We can discover the full compass of His historical actuality solely from the faith of the Christian community. Not even His purpose to found the community can be quite understood historically save by one who, as a member of it, subordinates himself to His Person.

"Hence it follows . . . that the material of the theological doctrines of forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation is to be sought not so much directly in the words of Christ, as in the correlative representations of the original consciousness of the community. The immediate object of theological cognition is the community's faith that it stands to God in a relation essentially conditioned by the forgiveness of sins. . . . Such being the position of affairs, we have now a basis for the practice of theology in attaching its terminology directly to the apostolic circle of ideas. It would be a mistaken purism were any one, in this respect, to prefer the less developed statements of Jesus to the forms of apostolic thought."

through Paul and through Augustine quite as truly as through Matthew and through Mark. Especially important are the books of the New Testament, since in them we see the effects of Christ upon human life, set forth for the first time in their purity. To the original experience of redemption thus recorded, later experience adds nothing essential, though it confirms the early record by the testimony of a great and ever-increasing crowd of witnesses.¹ Hence to Ritschl, for all his freedom of criticism, the New Testament has normative significance in determining the answer to our question, What is Christianity?²

To sum up: Christianity is the religion of redemption, foreshadowed in the Old Testament, revealed by Christ, who is at once the Saviour from sin, and the founder of that kingdom of brotherly service, in which the ethical ideal of humanity is for the first time realized, and into which, as the centuries go on, it is God's plan to gather more and more of the sons of men.

From what has been said, the contrast between

¹ *Recht. und Vers.* p. 8, Eng. tr. p. 8. The idea of the Christian religion "is reached by an orderly reproduction of the thought of Christ and the apostles; it is confirmed by being compared with other species and stages of religion."

² *Unterricht*, § 3. "Das Verständniss des Christenthums wird nur dann dem Anspruch desselben auf Vollkommenheit gerecht werden, wenn es vom Standpunkte der christlichen Gemeinde aus unternommen wird. Weil aber im Laufe der Geschichte derselbe mannigfach verschoben und der Gesichtskreis der Gemeinde durch fremde Einflüsse getrübt worden ist, so gilt als Grundsatz der evangelischen Kirche, dass man die christliche Lehre *allein* aus der heiligen Schrift schöpfe. Dieser Grundsatz bezieht sich direct auf die im Neuen Testament gesammelten Urkunden des Christenthums, zu welchen sich die Urkunden der hebräischen Religion im Alten Testamente als unumgängliche Hilfsmittel des Verständnisses verhalten."

Ritschl's view and that of Hegel is clear. To Hegel, Christianity is simply the crown of natural religion; the particular historic form in which the eternal principles of the religious life were bound, sooner or later, to express themselves. To Ritschl, Christianity is the supernatural religion; not to be accounted for by the preceding development, having its uniqueness in this, that it lifts man above the law of necessity to which he were else subject, into the spiritual realm which is the sphere of freedom. To the one, Christ is simply the most perfect illustration of a principle rationally deducible without Him; to the other, He is the creator of a new life, which without Him could never have been.

4. *The Ritschlian Apologetic.*¹

But it may be asked, Wherein consists the scientific value of this view of religion? How does it differ

¹ It may seem strange to speak of a Ritschlian apologetic in view of Ritschl's dislike to everything which savored of this nature (cf. his disclaimer of any desire to demonstrate the truth of Christianity scientifically, *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 187, Eng. tr. p. 197). Otto Ritschl (*Leben*, II. p. 167) declares that "every apologetic tendency was foreign" to his father's theology. To his mind, this was a matter for the preacher and the missionary, with which the dogmatic theologian, writing to convinced Christians, had no concern. None the less is it true that in seeking for the intelligent Christian a view of his religion which, from his own point of view, shall be scientifically defensible, he is serving an apologetic purpose. He seeks to establish Christian faith upon a ground in which it shall be independent of the fluctuations of the changing *Weltanschauung* of contemporary thought. Indeed, in some passages he goes even further, declaring that the theological exposition of Christianity is complete only "when it has been demonstrated that the Christian ideal of life, and no other, satisfies the claims of the human spirit to knowledge of things universally" (*Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 25, Eng. tr. p. 25). This apologetic suggestion has been much more fully developed by later members

from those earlier conceptions against which the definitions of Schleiermacher and of Hegel came as protests? Other theologians beside Ritschl have affirmed the supernatural character of Christianity, but they have failed to justify their claim at the bar of reason. Can Ritschl do better? To answer this we need to spend a moment or two over Ritschl's doctrine of *Werthurtheile*.¹

All judgments, according to Ritschl, may be divided into two classes, theoretical judgments, which are concerned with the cause of sensations, as realities objectively given, and judgments of value (*Werthurtheile*), which estimate them in their relation to the subject, according to the pleasure or pain which they produce.² The former are the objects of science and philosophy; the latter of ethics and of æsthetics. It is true that value-judgments enter into scientific knowledge also, since without interest (*i. e.* value) science could not be. But their function is subordinate. They are concomitant rather than independent.³ In ethics, however, we have to do with independent value-judgments; judgments, that is to say, whose distinguishing feature is to be found in their practical bearing upon our life.⁴

It is with such independent value-judgments that

of the school (*e. g.* Hermann, *Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit*, p. 270 *sq.*; Schultz, *Apologetik*; Kaftan, *Die Wahrheit der christlichen Religion*; Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*).

¹ *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 193 *sq.*, Eng. tr. p. 203 *sq.* Cf. Garvie, *op. cit.* p. 161 *sq.*; Orr, *op. cit.* p. 61 *sq.*, and the literature cited p. 224, note (e).

² *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 194, Eng. tr. p. 204.

³ *Ibid.* p. 195, Eng. tr. p. 204.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 195, Eng. tr. p. 205. Ritschl admits that it is not altogether easy to distinguish the independent value-judgments of ethics from those of religion. Nevertheless he thinks with care it can be done.

religion has to do.¹ What things are in themselves is indifferent to it. It deals with them only in their practical bearing upon the life of man. Thus to the religious man, as religious, it is a matter of no importance how the world came to be what it is; whether through evolution, special creation, or any other of the various methods which have been proposed. What he wants to know is the meaning of the world to-day, so far as it affects his own religious life; the significance of the sufferings and sins with which it afflicts him; and how he may be delivered from both. So of God. The questions which philosophers have discussed as to the nature of God's consciousness and the like do not interest the Christian, whose sole desire is to know God's will for him.² Not Comte himself could be more uncompromising in his attacks upon the idea of the

¹ *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 195, Eng. tr. p. 205. "Religious knowledge moves in independent value-judgments, which relate to man's attitude to the world, and call forth feelings of pleasure and pain, in which man either enjoys the dominion over the world vouchsafed him by God, or feels grievously the lack of God's help to that end."

² Ritschl is far from denying that the Christian man should seek a connected view of the world and of life. Such a view has a very practical bearing on his personal conduct, since it assures him that the God in whom he trusts is really master of the universe and hence able to bring His purpose to accomplishment within it. Indeed Ritschl contends that in seeking such a connected and unified view of the world philosophy deserts its proper scientific function, and "betrays rather an impulse religious in its nature, which philosophers ought to have distinguished from the cognitive methods they follow." For, he goes on to say, "in all philosophical systems the affirmation of a supreme law of existence, from which they undertake to deduce the world as a whole, is a departure from the strict application of the philosophic method, and betrays itself as being quite as much an object of the intuitive imagination as God and the world are for religious thought" (*Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 197 sq., Eng. tr. p. 207).

Absolute, which plays so prominent a part in religious discussions. To Ritschl absoluteness is an inheritance from the Greek philosophy, full of misleading associations; an abstraction on which the religious nature tries in vain to feed.¹ The Christian conception of God is not abstract, but concrete. It is warm, personal, individual, definite. The Christian sees God in the face of Jesus Christ.² His characteristic attribute is love, and his appropriate name is Father.³

But while banishing the Absolute as a theoretical conception from religion, Ritschl, like Kant, retains its practical equivalent in other ways. What the theoretical reason cannot afford, the conscience and the religious experience provide. In Christianity we do actually experience a power which delivers us from our weakness, our ignorance and our sin, and transfers us into the glorious freedom of the children of God. This is a matter of experience, not to be denied, as positive a fact as any of those which enter into the catalogue of

¹ Of the term "Absolute" he writes (*Theol. und Metaphysik*, p. 18): "Das Absolute! wie erhehend das klingt! Ich erinnere mich nur noch dunkel, dass das Wort mich in meiner Jugend beschäftigt hat, als die Hegelsche Terminologie auch mich in ihren Strudel zu ziehen drohte. Es ist lange her, und das Wort ist mir in dem Masse fremd geworden, als ich keinen weitreichenden Gedanken in demselben bezeichnet finde. Denn wörtlich bedeutet es das, was abgelöst ist, was in keinen Beziehungen zu anderen steht, und Frank versteht es ebenso, da er dafür die Ausdrücke Durchsichselbstsein, Insichselbstsein, Seinselbstsein einsetzt."

² *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 259 sq., Eng. tr. p. 272 sq.

³ *Ibid.* p. 281, Eng. tr. p. 296 sq. In asserting that the fundamental attribute of God is love, Ritschl is careful to avoid all appearance of sentimentality. As Eicke has shown (*op. cit.* p. 24) there was nothing which he abhorred more. To Ritschl love is an ethical conception through and through, as appears from his identification of the grace of God with His righteousness (*Unterricht*, § 16).

the positivist philosopher. In bringing us into contact with such a God, religion makes us acquainted with the ultimate reality.¹

The Ritschlian apologetic for Christianity consists in the attempt, by the distinction just described, to lay a scientific basis for such a reality. If knowledge includes *Werthurtheile* as well as theoretical judgments, then there is no reason why the utterances of the religious consciousness should not be accepted as giving us a knowledge as valid in its place as that of physics and of biology. The reality which is the object of a *Werthurtheil*, properly understood and defined, is just as real as that which is the object of a theoretical judgment. Nay, God as Saviour is a reality for which far more experimental evidence can be brought than for the Absolute of which philosophy talks so learnedly. No apologetic, it is true, can take the place of the Christian experience. If it could, its object would not be real, as modern thought understands reality. But to one who shares this experience, it is possible to defend its legitimacy by such considerations as we have indicated. And even to him who has it not, the position

¹ Taking the Absolute in the broad sense, as meaning the ultimate reality, no theologian of our day has a stronger sense of the absoluteness of Christianity than Ritschl. In rejecting the idea of the Absolute, he is contending against a particular metaphysical conception which he is careful to define, and which, when so defined, would be admitted by most theologians to be unchristian. Here, as always, attention to Ritschl's definitions is a necessary condition of understanding his thought, and failure to observe this elementary precaution is responsible for many current misconceptions. Similar examples might be given in his use of the terms Metaphysics and Mysticism, both of which he understands in a sense more narrow than that commonly employed in theological terminology.

of the Christian may be made to commend itself as one not unworthy of an educated man. Along such lines as this Ritschl attempts to parry the positivist attack, and to win respect for his view of Christianity as scientifically valid.

This is the point at which the Ritschlian theology has been most persistently attacked. Theologians who on all other questions stand at sword's point forget their differences for the time in order to join hands against the common foe. Pfleiderer¹ and Frank,² Luthardt³ and Lipsius⁴ find in opposition to Ritschl an unexpected bond of union. By the orthodox Lutheran of the school of Frank, he is accused of rationalism in abandoning to the tender mercies of a hostile criticism facts in the Gospel record of vital importance to the Christian faith.⁵ By the speculative theologian of Hegelian sympathies he is charged with agnosticism in that he is content to found his theology upon the purely subjective basis of

¹ *Die Theologie der ritschl'schen Schule* (*Jahr. für prot. Theol.* 1891); also *Development of Theology*, etc. p. 183 sq.

² *Zur Theologie A. Ritschls*, 1891, 3d ed.; *Der Subjectivismus in der Theologie und sein Recht*, in *Dogmatische Studien*, 1892, p. 27; *Geschichte und Kritik der neueren Theologie*, etc. 1898, p. 262 sq.

³ *Zeitschrift für kirchliche Wissenschaft und kirchliches Leben*, 1881, p. 617 sq.; 1886, p. 632 sq.

⁴ *Die ritschl'sche Theologie* (*Jahr. für prot. Theol.* 1888; also separately printed).

⁵ E. g. the personal pre-existence of Christ (cf. Frank, *Zur Theologie A. Ritschls*, p. 29). Ritschl himself accepts the Johannine doctrine, but gives it a moral interpretation. In this he has not been followed by his scholars, many of whom frankly reject the doctrine, seeing in it a result of the influence of Greek metaphysics. Cf. Frank, *Geschichte*, p. 317, "Man sieht, Ritschl kommt hier (*i. e.* in his interpretation of John) an jene Grenze an, welche seine Schüler, z. B. Ad. Harnack, bereits und zwar mit vollem Bewusstsein überschritten haben."

a *Werthurtheil*, and denies the possibility of any rational proof of the great religious verities.¹ Thus while some tax him with trusting reason too little, others quarrel with him for relying upon it too much,² and in the din of the controversy there is no slight danger that his distinctive contribution to theology may be underestimated, if not altogether overlooked.

It must be frankly confessed that the charge of subjectivism brought against the theology of Ritschl is not without a certain justification in fact. It is one of the curiosities of history that the theologian, who, among the moderns, is most conspicuous for the bitterness and persistence of his attack upon mysticism in every form, should be himself before all the theologian of the individual religious experience. Like the mystics, Ritschl finds the ultimate authority in religion in the immediate experience of the individual soul, as distinct from rational argument or ecclesiastical authority. His insistence upon the place of the historic Christ in every

¹ Pfleiderer, *Development*, p. 183. "On a closer inspection his (Ritschl's) famous theory of cognition is seen to be only a dilettante confusion of the irreconcilable views of subjective idealism, which resolves things into phenomena of consciousness, and common-sense realism, which looks upon the phenomena of consciousness as things themselves, admitting no distinction between phenomena as perceived by us and the being of things in themselves; a confusion to which the nearest parallel is the semi-idealistic, semi-materialistic theory of the Neo-Kantian Lange, author of the *Geschichte des Materialismus*, which enjoyed a brief celebrity as having supplied, it was thought, a justification of the sceptical tendencies of the time." Of the later editions of the "Justification" the same author adds that they show "an increasing advance in the direction of speculative scepticism and historical dogmatism" (*Ibid.*).

² Lipsius combines both charges. He maintains that the standpoint of Ritschl is formally positivism, materially rationalism (*Die ritschl'sche Theologie*, p. 22).

true religious experience; his polemic against the Neoplatonic doctrine of an immediate contact of the soul with God, in which the former is raised above the limits of the finite; his emphasis upon the part played by historic facts, and particularly by the Christian community in mediating religious truth, show his keen sense of the dangers to which mysticism in the technical sense is exposed.¹ But they do not alter the fact that the ultimate basis of Ritschl's faith in Christ and of his acceptance of the Christian religion is an experience as individual as that of the Pietists he condemns. Ritschl believes Christ to be God because in Him he is conscious of a power lifting him above himself into a new world of peace and strength. Why this should be he cannot tell, nor can he give any answer to the man who asks him for an explanation than the fact of his experience. Enough that he point to Christ as the one

¹ Ritschl defines mysticism as follows: "Mystik ist — zunächst die durch den areopagitischen Gottesbegriff geleitete Andacht, in welcher die Ueberschreitung aller Vermittlungen bis zum Aufgehen des bestimmten Bewusstseins in das unterschiedslose Wesen Gottes, als etwas schon in der irdischen Gegenwart Erreichbares erstrebt wird." (*Recht. und Vers.* I. p. 113, 1st ed. quoted by Reischle, *Ein Wort zur Controverse*, etc. p. 6.) In this sense of course, Ritschl has nothing in common with mysticism. Reischle, in his excellent study, *Ein Wort zur Controverse über die Mystik in der Theologie* (Freiburg, 1886), thinks that Ritschl is justified in his definition, and that his polemic against mysticism, as he defines it, is well taken. A similar view is taken by Hermann, in his well-known book, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, in which he contrasts the Catholic type of piety, as mystic in the narrow sense, with the Protestant, in which the relation of the soul to God is mediated in every case by the historic Christ. But, taking mysticism in a wider sense to denote the incommunicable elements in the Christian experience, both these writers admit its legitimacy, and make place for it in their theology. This is particularly true of Hermann. On the legitimacy of such a wider use of the term, cf. Kaftan, *Das Wesen der christlichen Religion*, p. 262, note.

through whom he has received deliverance, leaving it to the other to make the test, and try the experiment for himself.¹

This explains his indifference to the results of critical study of the Scriptures. Since his faith in Christ does not rest upon any particular fact connected with His life, but upon the total impression of His person, it cannot be affected by the shifting results of critical processes. Let criticism do its worst, it cannot alter the fact that acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Master has made of Ritschl a new man. In like manner of the rational arguments by which men have sought to support faith in Christ. However useful these may be in their place, they fall short of producing genuine conviction. What argument has built

¹ To be sure Ritschl calls attention to the fact that in Christ we find one who perfectly fulfils his earthly vocation, and for our admiration for whom, therefore, we can give rational grounds. But it is not upon such grounds that Christian faith rests. Christ is not merely Example but Saviour. Indeed, He is so far above us, that Ritschl denies that the Christian life can properly be stated in terms of the imitation of Christ. Christian faith rests upon the fact that contact with Christ, as presented to us through His church—how Ritschl cannot explain—actually gives us new power and transforms us into new men. It is upon this individual experience of salvation that his whole theology rests. That is what he means by calling the divinity of Christ a *Werthurtheil*. It is the expression of the value which Christ has for each individual who trusts Him.

It is a well-known fact that many of the later scholars of Ritschl have emphasized the immediate elements in the Christian experience to a much greater extent than Ritschl himself (*e.g.* Kaftan, Scholz, Gottschick, Bornemann). Scholz even goes so far as to admit that mysticism in the technical sense has its relative right (*cf.* Ecke, p. 299). Ecke regards this as a correction of the Ritschlian theology. We are inclined to think it is rather the recognition and clearer statement of elements already contained implicitly within Ritschl's own teaching.

up, argument may overthrow. No syllogism is strong enough to bridge the gap between the finite and the infinite. What is needed here is not argument but experience. "Whereas once I was blind, now I see." To Ritschl, as to the blind man, contact with Christ means sight. To him whose eyes have been opened, there is no need of many words. To him who is still in darkness the most eloquent description is worse than useless.

We cannot but agree with Ecke in his opinion that it was a great misfortune that Ritschl's polemic against Pietism should have been based upon so slight an acquaintance with its living representatives.¹ Not only might a closer contact have led him to mitigate the severity of his criticism as he gained a new insight into the truly Christlike character of many of those whom he had been led in good faith to oppose, but on the other side a better understanding of the real meaning and purpose of his theology would certainly have removed many needless misunderstandings, and opened the way for the reception of his message in quarters which are now too often closed against it.

For that Ritschl has a message for the church of to-day no one who has made a careful study of his theology can doubt. It is most unfortunate that attention should have been concentrated so exclusively upon the mere outworks and approaches of his theology. Ritschl was not a great philosopher, and his theory of knowledge is generally admitted to be the least satisfactory part of his system. To this day scholars are

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 27 *sq.*

not agreed as to exactly what it is.¹ The really epoch-making achievement of Ritschl lies along other lines. It is found in his effort to determine with a clearness not attained by his predecessors what is the distinctive feature in the Christian experience; to discover, on the basis of a scientific study of Christian history, what were the new elements which entered into the world with Christ; and thus to gain a standard for distinguishing what is truly Christian from all that falsely usurps the name: in a word, to discover and define the essence of Christianity as a historic religion, in order to make possible the more effective preaching of its

¹ On the *Erkenntnistheorie* of Ritschl, cf. Ecke, *op. cit.* p. 46 sq.; Wendland, p. 37 sq.; Garvie, *op. cit.* p. 39 sq.; Orr, *op. cit.* p. 57 sq.; Wenley, *Contemporary Theology and Theism*, p. 87 sq. and the literature cited p. 224.

Traub (*Zeitschrift für Theol. und Kirche*, 1894, p. 97) regards Ritschl as a critical idealist, reproducing the Kantian theory of knowledge; Stählin (*Kant, Lotze, Albrecht Ritschl*, p. 134 sq. especially p. 144) finds in him a subjective idealist; Garvie (*op. cit.* p. 45), a vulgar (as distinguished from a philosophical) realist; Pfeiderer (*Development*, p. 183) holds that his theory of knowledge is "a dilettante confusion of the irreconcilable views of subjective idealism, which resolves things into phenomena of consciousness, and common-sense realism which looks upon the phenomena of consciousness as things themselves." All admit that his view is far from clear, and that he is not consistent with himself (cf. especially Wendland, *op. cit.* p. 39).

Ritschl himself tells us that he learned his theory of knowledge from Lotze, and is apparently not conscious of any difference between his view and that of this philosopher. According to Ritschl there are three great theories of knowledge, the Platonic-Scholastic, the Kantian, and that of Lotze, which he himself adopts. The latter holds "that in the phenomena which in a definite space exhibit changes to a limited extent and in a determinate order, we cognize the thing as the cause of the qualities operating upon us, as the end which things serve as means, as the law of their constant changes" (*Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 20, Eng. tr. p. 19). The fullest statement and defence of Ritschl's own position is given in his *Theologie und Metaphysik*.

Gospel to men. This problem, which he grasped with a clearness, and followed with a persistence beyond all praise, may be said to have formed the subject of his lifework from first to last, and it is this which he bequeaths as his chief heritage to the future.

5. *The School of Ritschl.*¹

The influence of Ritschl is the central fact which the student of present theological movements must face. It is felt not only in Germany, where the most active

¹ On the school of Ritschl, cf. Ecke, *Die theologische Schule Albrecht Ritschls und die evangelische Kirche der Gegenwart*, Vol. I. p. 67 sq.; Otto Ritschl, *Albrecht Ritschls Leben*, II. p. 236 sq. and the works of Nippold, Wendland, Garvie, and Orr, already referred to. See also the files of the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* (cited below as *Z. Th. K.*), the organ of the school, and *Die christliche Welt*, a more popular paper representing the same spirit. The extensive literature in connection with the recent controversy about the use of the Apostles' Creed may also be consulted.

The limits of the so-called Ritschlian school are very indefinite. Among the theologians who are usually classed among its members are Kaftan, Hermann, Harnack, Reischle, II. Schultz, Bornemann, Bender, O. Ritschl, J. Weiss, Wendt, Häring, Gottschick, Iloofs, Nitzsch, Lobstein, Kattenbusch, Rade, Drews, Scholz, Troeltsch. But many of these depart very widely from the positions of Ritschl. Ecke distinguishes three periods in the history of the school: 1, from 1874-1880, that of the founding of the school, and its development along lines of thought genuinely characteristic of Ritschl, his scholars remaining in essential agreement with him (p. 74 sq.); 2, from 1880-1889, beginning with the accession of Häring and Kaftan, who represent different points of view, and maintain their own independence of Ritschl. This is the period of transition, in which the bond of union is no longer specific agreement in opinion, but the common employment of a certain theological method (p. 76); 3, 1889 to the present, the further development of the school under Harnack's leadership and the gradual breaking down of the barriers which separate the school of Ritschl, on the one side from the speculative, on the other from the orthodox or ecclesiastical schools.

and progressive of the younger writers own him as master, but also in increasing degree in England,

Among the writings of the individual members of the school, we may cite the following:

Kaftan: *Das Wesen der christlichen Religion*, 1881, 2d ed. Basel, 1888; *Die Wahrheit der christlichen Religion*, Basel, 1888, Eng. tr. by Ferries, *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, Edinburgh, 2 vols. 1894; *Glaube und Dogma*, Bielefeld, 1889; *Brauchen wir ein neues Dogma?* Bielefeld, 1890; *Das Christenthum und die Philosophie*, Leipzig, 1895; *Die Selbständigkeit des Christenthums*, in *Z. Th. K.* 1896, p. 373; *Dogmatik*, Freiburg, 1897.

Hermann: *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie*, Halle, 1876; *Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit*, Halle, 1879; *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott*. 2d ed. Stuttgart, 1892, Eng. tr. by Stanyon, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, London, 1895; *Der Begriff der Offenbarung*, Giessen, 1887; *Warum bedarf unser Glaube geschichtlicher Thatsachen?* Halle, 1892; *Die Gewissheit des Glaubens und die Freiheit der Theologie*, 2d ed. Freiburg, 1889; *Der evangelische Glaube und die Theologie Albrecht Ritschls*, Marburg, 1890; *Der geschichtliche Christus, der Grund unseres Glaubens*, in *Z. Th. K.* 1892, p. 232 sq.

Harnack: *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3 vols. 3d ed. 1894 sq., Eng. tr. by Buchanan, *History of Dogma*, Boston, 1895-1900, 7 vols.; *Das Christenthum und die Geschichte*, Leipzig, 1895, Eng. tr. by Saunders, *Christianity and History*, London, 1896; *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, Leipzig, 1900, Eng. tr. by Saunders, *What is Christianity?* London and New York, 1901.

Reischle: *Die Frage nach dem Wesen der Religion*, Freiburg, 1889; *Der Glaube an Jesum Christum und die geschichtliche Erforschung seines Lebens*, in *Hefte zur christl. Welt*, No. 12, Leipzig, 1893; *Christenthum und Entwicklungsgedanke*, *Ibid.* No. 31, Leipzig, 1898; *Ein Wort zur Controverse über die Mystik in der Theologie*, Freiburg, 1886; *Der Streit über die Begründung des Glaubens auf den geschichtlichen Jesus Christus*, in *Z. Th. K.* 1897; *Werthurtheile und Glaubensurtheile*, Halle, 1900. *Leitsätze für eine akademische Vorlesung über die christliche Glaubenslehre*, Halle, 1899.

H. Schultz: *Die Lehre von der Gottheit Christi*, Gotha, 1881; *Grundriss der evang. Apologetik*, Göttingen, 1894; *Grundriss der evang. Dogmatik*, 2d ed. Göttingen, 1892; *Alttestamentliche Theologie*, 5th ed. Göttingen, 1896, Eng. tr. from the 4th ed. by Paterson, 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1892.

W. Bornemann: *Unterricht im Christenthum*, 3d ed. Göttingen, 1893.

W. Bender: *Das Wesen der Religion*, 4th ed. Bonn, 1888.

J. Weiss: *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, Göttingen, 1892, 2d ed. 1900; *Die Nachfolge Christi und die Predigt der Gegenwart*, Göttingen, 1895.

H. H. Wendt: *Die Lehre Jesu*, 2 vols. Göttingen, 1886, 1890, Eng.

France, and America as well. Unmagnetic in person, obscure and unattractive in style, having left no single work which adequately presents the principles for which he stands, it is yet the fact that this Göttingen professor has exerted an influence which in range and intensity is paralleled only by that of Hegel. Unlike the latter, the secret of his power consists, not in the

tr. by Wilson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, 2 vols. New York, 1892; *Die Aufgabe der systematischen Theologie*, Göttingen, 1894; *Der Erfahrungsbeweis für die Wahrheit des Christentums*, Göttingen, 1897; *Die Norm des echten Christentums in Hefte zur christl. Welt*, No. 5, Leipzig, 1893; *Die Lehre des Paulus verglichen mit der Lehre Jesu*, in *Z. Th. K.* 1894, p. 1 sq.

Th. Häring: *Ueber das bleibende im Glauben an Christus*, Stuttgart, 1880; *Zur Versöhnungslehre, eine dogmatische Untersuchung*, Göttingen, 1893; *Die Lebensfrage der systematischen Theologie, die Lebensfrage des christlichen Glaubens*, Tübingen, 1895; *Gehört die Auferstehung zum Glaubensgrund?* in *Z. Th. K.* 1897, p. 332; *Zur Verständigung in der systematischen Theologie*, in *Z. Th. K.* 1899, p. 97.

Troeltsch: *Die christliche Weltanschauung und die wissenschaftliche Gegenströmungen*, in *Z. Th. K.* 1893, p. 493; 1894, p. 167; *Die Selbständigkeit der Religion*, in *Z. Th. K.* 1895, p. 361 sq.; 1896, pp. 71 and 167; *Geschichte und Metaphysik*, in *Z. Th. K.* 1898, p. 1; *Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte*, Tübingen, 1902.

Otto Ritschl: *Albrecht Ritschls Leben*, 2 vols. Freiburg, 1892; *Ueber Werthurtheile*, 1895; *Der geschichtliche Christus, der christliche Glaube und die theologische Wissenschaft*, in *Z. Th. K.* 1893, p. 371.

Kattenbusch: *Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl*, 2d ed. Giessen, 1893; *Lehrbuch d. vergleichenden Confessionskunde*, Vol. I. Freiburg, 1892.

Lobstein: *Introduction à la Dogmatique Protestante*, Paris, 1896, German tr. by Maas, Freiburg, 1897. See also his *Études christologiques*, Paris, 1891, 1892, etc.

Nitzsch: *Lehrbuch der evang. Dogmatik*, Freiburg, 1892, 2d ed. 1896.

Loofs: *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte*, Halle, 1890, 3d ed. 1893; *Symbolik*, Vol. I. Freiburg, 1902.

Rade: *Die Wahrheit der christlichen Religion*, Tübingen, 1900; *Reine Lehre*, in *Hefte zur christl. Welt*, No. 43, Tübingen, 1900.

Schwab: *The Kingdom of God*, New York, 1897. In general sympathy with the Ritschlian point of view are the Essays collected in *Faith and Criticism*, New York, 1893. Cf. especially p. 97 sq., *Revelation and the Person of Christ*, by P. T. Forsyth.

unity and symmetry of his system (although he is before all things the systematic theologian) but in the wealth of suggestion which his writings contain, and the multitude of new viewpoints which he has opened up, leaving their further exploration and development to the industry of his disciples. If one were asked to state wherein consists the unity of the so-called Ritschl school, it would be difficult to give an answer. Apart from a common sense of gratitude to the master for stimulus, spiritual and intellectual, and the abiding conviction that the uniqueness of Christianity, as a historic religion, is to be found in the person of its founder, scarcely a point could be named upon which all agree. Among so-called Ritschlians are to be found tendencies conservative and radical; individuals who follow closely the lines laid down by Ritschl himself and others who depart widely from his teaching. Yet in all its branches the school is characterized by one consuming interest: the desire to know what is the essence of Christianity, as distinct from its accidents; to grasp the central principle which gives unity and consistence to the widely varying forms in which historically it has manifested itself. Nowhere, it may be said with confidence, has the problem which now engages us received more constant and persistent attention than at the hands of those whose first impulse to theological study has been received from Ritschl.

And it is not only among his disciples in the narrow sense that the influence of Ritschl is felt.¹ All parties

¹ Among the independent theologians more or less influenced by the Ritschlian movement, we may mention R. A. Lipsius (*Philosophie und Re-*

in the church have been affected by the new influences which he has set in motion. The speculative theologians have been recalled from their lofty heights to the consideration of the historical questions upon the right solution of which all sound speculation depends.¹ The conservative churchmen have been forced anew to give an account of their faith.² If Ritschl be not right in his description of the essentials of Christianity, all the more reason that those who hold a fuller and sounder faith should bear their testimony. Thus on every side and from the most varied quarters, we find men of all schools and of

ligion, Leipzig, 1885; *Lehrbuch der evangelisch-protestant. Dogmatik*, 3d ed. Braunschweig, 1893. Cf. also the literature cited by Wendland, *op. cit.* p. iii.); M. Kähler (*Dogmatische Zeitfragen*, Leipzig, 1898, 2 vols.; *Die Wissenschaft der christlichen Lehre*, 2d ed. Leipzig, 1893; *Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche biblische Christus*, 2d ed. Leipzig, 1896); J. Köstlin (*Religion nach dem neuen Testament*, in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1888, p. 7 sq.; *Der Glaube und seine Bedeutung für Erkenntniss, Leben und Kirche*, Berlin, 1895; *Die Begründung unserer sittlich-religiösen Ueberzeugung*, Berlin, 1893, etc.).

¹ A good illustration of the way in which Ritschl's influence has made itself felt upon men who have been trained in a very different school is to be found in the recent *Dogmengeschichte* of A. Dorner (Berlin, 1899). Of early Christianity he says (p. 34): "Der gemeinsame Glaubenssatz, durch den das Christenthum als neue Religion auftritt, ist die Ueberzeugung dass die Sündenvergebung in dem von Christus begründeten Reiche mit der Gotteskindschaft gegeben und ein neuer ethischer Lebensimpuls universaler Liebe hiermit verbunden sei, der eine Erfüllung der sittlichen Aufgaben aus der Gesinnung heraus ermöglicht." Cf. p. 622, "Das Wesen des Christenthums besteht darin, dass die Gottesgemeinschaft, welche alle Religion anstrebt, in den ethisch bestimmten Persönlichkeiten als universal-ethische Gottmenschheit realisirt wird; damit ist einmal der Werth der Persönlichkeit in das Unendliche gesteigert; es ist aber zugleich ein ethischer Universalismus eingeleitet, der in der Idee des Reiches Gottes seinen Ausdruck findet," etc.

² Ecke, *op. cit.* p. 318.

no school addressing themselves to the question, What is Christianity?

To rehearse all the definitions which have been the outcome of this discussion would carry us too far afield.¹ It is sufficient to state that among the followers of Ritschl we note the same two tendencies, to which we have already so often called attention: the tendency to magnify the uniqueness of Christianity — its contrast with and separation from all preceding forms of religion; and the tendency to emphasize its points of similarity with other faiths, — to see in Christianity the fulfilment and completion of a religious ideal, founded in the nature of man as such, and even before Christ, more or less clearly revealed. We may take as representing these two tendencies Julius Kaftan and E. Troeltsch.

In his books, "Das Wesen der christlichen Religion," and "Die Wahrheit der christlichen Religion," Professor Kaftan has given the most exhaustive study of

¹ Besides the definitions considered below, we may mention those of Nitzsch (*Lehrbuch der Dogmatik*, Freiburg, 1892, p. 208): "Das Christenthum ist diejenige ethische, monotheistische und universalistische Religion, in welche als höchstes Gut und als Heilsgut die Theilnahme an dem durch Jesus von Nazareth verwirklichten, Gotteskindschaft und Liebe, mit beiden aber ewiges (göttliches) Leben einschliessenden Reiche Gottes gilt," and of Schultz (*Dogmatik*, p. 18): "Als die religiöse Grundüberzeugung, von welcher aus das evangelische Christenthum dogmatisch verstanden sein will, ergibt sich aus der gesammten heiligen Schrift die Ueberzeugung von dem in Christus verwirklichten Reiche Gottes, dessen Glieder wir im Glauben werden, und in dessen Gemeinschaft wir der Vaterliebe Gottes gewiss sind, also das Evangelium im Sinne unserer Kirche." Cf. *Apologetik*, p. 84: "Es liegt im tiefsten Wesen des Christenthums begründet das sein Stifter auch sein religiöser Mittelpunkt, ja sein wesentlicher Inhalt, sein muss." Cf. also Bornemann, *Unterricht im Christenthum*, 3d ed. §§ 3-7.

the nature of Christianity which has thus far appeared in print. The results to which he comes are contained in the definition which we extract from the earlier pages of his recently published "Dogmatik."¹ "The nature of the Christian Religion" — so we read — "is determined by the two thoughts of the kingdom of God and of redemption. In the kingdom of God which Jesus Christ preached, the Christian recognizes his eternal end, lying above the world in God, but to which the only way leads through moral development in the world. By means of the reconciliation with God which Jesus Christ has brought to pass he knows himself, in spite of his sin, as bidden into this kingdom. In these two elements, mutually related to and conditioning each other, the experience of the Christian religion consists."²

The similarity of this definition to that of Ritschl is manifest. As by Ritschl, so here, the ideas of redemption and of the kingdom are united as the two foci of the Christian ellipse. But in the working out of his conception, Kaftan lays more stress upon the transcendent elements in religion. In the kingdom of God the Christian recognizes his eternal end, which lies above the world in God. Unlike Ritschl, he is unwilling to restrict religion to the narrow sphere of the *Werthurtheile* within which the former would confine it. The judgments of religion are based upon *Werthurtheile*. But they go on from these to express positive convictions concerning the nature of things. They are

¹ Freiburg, 1897.

² § 2, p. 8.

Seinsurtheile based upon *Werthurtheile*¹ — judgments of existence, based upon judgments of value. For example, we know God only through His influence upon us, but, once known, we cannot but think of him as really existing, even apart from us. Here we have the ontological conception which Ritschl sought so hard to banish, slipping back into the teaching of the most prominent systematic theologian of his school. The Absolute so dreaded by Ritschl has no terrors for Kaftan. To him the sentence, God is the Absolute, gives the formula for the knowledge of God in Christianity, as well as in every spiritual religion.² Only we must be careful to define it rightly and to guard it against misapprehensions. Rightly understood, it is the most positive of conceptions, full of ethical and spiritual meaning. It denotes the being, who is "the

¹ *Dogmatik*, § 3, p. 29. "Wenn Ritschl selbst sich so ausdrückte: die religiöse Weltanschauung verläuft in Werthurtheilen, so war das mindestens missverständlich. Die religiöse Weltanschauung verläuft vielmehr in Seinsurtheilen, ist Erkenntniss im eigentlichen Sinn, folgend aus der Erkenntniss, dass Gott ist und was Gott ist. Aber sie steht in anderen inneren Beziehungen als sonst das theoretische Erkennen. Nicht objektive Auffassung der Welt und denkende Verarbeitung der so gewonnenen Eindrücke, sondern eine in Werthurtheilen verlaufende innere Erfahrung liegt ihr zu Grunde." For his application of this to the doctrine of God cf. § 17, p. 169 *sq.*

² *Dogmatik*, § 16, p. 161. "Der Satz, dass Gott das Absolute ist, bezeichnet das Schema der Gotteserkenntniss in der christlichen wie in jeder geistigen Religion. Er bedeutet, dass wir unter Gott — dem Subjekt aller der Sätze, in denen die Gotteserkenntniss ausgesprochen wird — das absolute Ziel alles menschlichen Strebens und die absolute Macht über alles Wirkliche verstehn. Nicht was Gott ist, sondern welche Stelle die Gotteserkenntniss in unserem geistigen Leben einnimmt, kommt darin zum Ausdruck. Es sind aber die Beziehungen des Willens und des persönlichen Lebens, in denen der Satz verständlich ist, während er als theoretischer Verstandessatz genommen unbestimmt und leer bleibt."

ultimate end of all human striving, and the supreme power over all reality.”¹ In such sentences as these we have a doctrine of God, which in its metaphysics approaches closely to that of traditional theology.²

But if Kaftan departs from Ritschl in his doctrine of *Werthurtheile*, and in his consequent view of the relation between theology and philosophy, he follows him in his strict supernaturalism.³ Christianity is to Kaftan essentially a supernatural religion,⁴ sharply contrasted as such with all natural religion,⁵ and having its only

¹ *Dogmatik*, § 16, p. 161.

² Note especially Kaftan's treatment of those attributes which express the supermundane character of God, his "independence of the limitations of space and time," his eternity, his transcendence, *i. e.* separateness from the world. Cf. § 17, 4. On Ritschl's view of the eternity of God, cf. *Recht. und Vers.* III. p. 281 *sq.*, Eng. tr. p. 296 *sq.*

³ Kaftan's views on this point are most fully brought out in two articles in the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*. The first, which appeared in Vol. VI. p. 373 *sq.* and is entitled "Die Selbständigkeit des Christenthums," is a criticism of a preceding series of articles by Troeltsch, entitled "Die Selbständigkeit der Religion." In these Troeltsch attacks the position of the Ritschl school, and specially of Kaftan, whom he accuses of applying the principle of supernatural revelation to Christianity, but treating all other religions in the spirit of the positivism of Feuerbach (V. p. 375). The second ("Erwiderung," VIII. p. 70) is an answer to a further article by Troeltsch, entitled, "Geschichte und Metaphysik" (VIII. p. 1 *sq.*), in which he attacks Kaftan's supernaturalism.

⁴ *Z. Th. K.* VIII. p. 82. "Der eigentliche Gegensatz zwischen Troeltsch und mir ist seiner Meinung nach der, dass ich den wesentlich supranaturalen Charakter des Christenthums und der ihm zu Grunde liegenden Gottesoffenbarung vertrete, während er es für die in der Gegenwart gestellte Aufgabe hält, das Christenthum aus dieser ihm nicht wesentlichen Schale loszulösen. . . . In der That liegt hier nach allem, was er ausführt, eine wesentliche Differenz zwischen uns." Cf. p. 71, "den Supranaturalismus . . . der für mich integrirender Bestandtheil meiner christlichen Glaubensüberzeugung ist."

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 87, 88. Kaftan admits that he makes the contrast, but denies that it is founded on prejudice. He is willing enough to recognize

adequate explanation in a special divine revelation of wholly exceptional character.¹ Between Christianity and the ethnic religions there is a great gulf fixed, and the efforts made by the science of Comparative Religion to bridge this gulf are unavailing.² In Christianity we have a new beginning, a miracle in the strict sense.³ The only way to understand it is to experience it, and any proof which ignores this fact is bound to fail.⁴

This is the point against which the criticism of Troeltsch directs itself.⁵ He utterly rejects the super-

supernatural revelation outside of Christianity, if any one will show it to him, but as a matter of fact it is impossible to compare such religions as Brahmanism and Buddhism with Christianity in this respect. "Denn die Unterschiede zwischen den grossen geistigen Religionen der Menschheit sind so ungeheure, dass beides sich nicht mit einander verträgt." (p. 89).

¹ *Ibid.* p. 91. "Aber freilich, damit soll nicht geleugnet werden, dass die Offenbarung in Christus und was damit zusammenhängt, mir etwas spezifisch Anderes ist, als was wir sonst als Offenbarung kennen, ein Hereintreten Gottes selbst in die Welt der Schöpfung, das nur einmal da ist und vorkommt, sich vom natürlichen (d. h. gewöhnlichen) Lauf der Dinge schlechthin abhebt. Und meine Behauptung ist nun die, dass das Christenthum an diesen Offenbarungsglauben gebunden ist und mit ihm steht oder fällt." Cf. p. 92: "Ohne den supranaturalistischen Offenbarungsglauben hat das Christenthum keinen Bestand."

² *Die Selbständigkeit des Christenthums*, pp. 377, 378. Here he contends that one of the few points on which the adherents of the so-called school of Ritschl have remained true to the views of their founder is in their maintenance of the independence of Christianity as over against the philosophy of religion in every form.

³ *Erwiderung*, p. 89. "Er, unser Herr, unser Heiland ist die Offenbarung Gottes schlechtweg. Wir heben diese Offenbarung and was unmittelbar mit ihr zusammenhängt, aus allem Uebrigen heraus. Von ihr gilt auch, dass sie die übernatürliche Offenbarung im besondern Sinn des Wortes ist." Cf. also the passages cited above.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 88, where he founds his conviction that the revelation of Christianity is wholly exceptional upon inner experience.

⁵ In the articles referred to above. See p. 272, note 3.

naturalism of Kaftan.¹ However extraordinary Christianity may be — and Troeltsch is the first to admit its uniqueness² — it is yet but a chapter in a larger religious history. It is the fulfilment of a religious ideal founded in the nature of man as such, and therefore manifesting itself more or less perfectly in all the existing religions.³ True religion did not begin with Christianity, though it completely expresses itself only in Christianity. On the contrary, it is as wide as human life. So far from such a position detracting from the supremacy of Christianity, it is the only one from which that supremacy can be rationally established.⁴ To talk of Christianity as the absolute religion, implies the presence of a standard universally admitted,

¹ *Geschichte und Metaphysik*, p. 9. "Aus religionsgeschichtlichen Studien hervorgehende Erwägungen dieser Art haben mich, so gut wie die ungeheure Mehrzahl der auf diesem Gebiet arbeiteten Forscher, schliesslich genötigt, jeden Rest von Supranaturalismus aufzugeben, der dem Christentum zum voraus eine ganz andersartige Stellung innerhalb der Religionsgeschichte ausmacht." Cf. pp. 5, 25.

² *Selbständigkeit der Religion*, VI., p. 211. "So ist also das Christentum doch als die absolute Religion anzuerkennen? Allerdings. Nur um diesen Preis ist es zu erleben und zu erfahren."

³ *Geschichte und Metaphysik*, p. 8. "Wer überhaupt in der Religion eine wirkliche Beziehung auf die übersinnliche Welt glauben zu dürfen gewiss ist, wird in alledem die allgemeine Uebernatürlichkeit und Erlösungskraft der Religion anerkennen, einen überall wirksamen Trieb zur Erreichung des Zieles, das wir im Christentum erreicht sehen und dessen Erreichung bei jenen durch verschiedenen Gründe verhindert worden ist." Cf. also pp. 3, 4, where he contends that in all religion there is a supernatural element.

⁴ *Geschichte*, p. 25. "Wir können das Christentum nicht als etwas *toto genere* von den nichtchristlichen Religionen Verschiedenes voraussetzen und beweisen. So sind wir daran gewiesen, von der Gesamterscheinung der Religion aus die Frage nach Stellung und Wahrheit des Christenthums zu erheben. Das ist aber nichts anderes als Religionsphilosophie."

by which it can be measured. That standard must be found, if anywhere, in the religious nature of man as such. The true apologist, therefore, is the student of Comparative Religion.¹ With such thoughts as this we find Troeltsch turning back from the position of Ritschl to the earlier viewpoint of Schleiermacher and of Hegel.²

Much the same criticism is brought against the method of Ritschl by Lipsius,³ the theologian, who, of all his contemporaries, stands on the whole closest to him. In his able review of the Ritschlian theology,⁴ he refers unfavorably to the extent to which Ritschl carries his opposition to natural theology,⁵ and declares that in denying the significance of the common religious life apart from Christianity, he in effect reduces Christianity to the level of natural religion, and so

¹ *Selbständigkeit*, p. 217. "Die christliche Idee erscheint als die einfache, von aller nationalen Besonderheit und aller Naturreligion befreite Konsequenz der religiösen Grundanlage überhaupt. Dass sie deshalb die absolute Religion sei, ist damit nicht im strengen Sinne zu beweisen, aber es erscheint doch als etwas Naheliegendes und Wahrscheinliches." The study of religion shows what are the needs and desires of the religious nature, and hence makes it improbable that any other religion will arise to take the place of Christianity. Thus it affords a rational basis for Christian confidence.

² This connection he himself recognizes. Cf. *Geschichte*, pp. 27, 43.

³ On Lipsius, cf. the literature cited above, p. 267, note 1.

⁴ *Die ritschl'sche Theologie*, in *Jahr. für prot. Theol.*, 1888.

⁵ P. 3. Here he shows that Ritschl not only agrees with Schleiermacher in rejecting natural theology in the sense of "einer Summe religiöser Erkenntnisse, die allen Menschen von Haus aus gemein seien," but also goes so far as to attack "das Streben, das allgemein Religiöse in allen geschichtlichen Religionsformen aufzusuchen und das Christliche nur als höchste Steigerung der allgemeinen Gottesoffenbarung zu betrachten." According to Ritschl, there is no general revelation of God, but only special revelation in Christ and in the Scriptures.

destroys the uniqueness he desires to magnify.¹ Lipsius maintains that the peculiar religious relationship of Christianity includes and takes for granted the general religious relationship, and holds it to be the first duty of the theologian to undertake an investigation of the nature, the origin, and the history of the religious consciousness as such.² Only after this preliminary investigation is completed is it possible to approach the problem of the definition of Christianity with any hope of success.³

But the discussions which have been set in motion by Ritschl have to do not only with such general questions as the philosophical basis of Christianity, and its relation to other forms of faith, but also and more particularly with the problem of historic Christianity itself.

¹ "Hier ist nun der Punkt, wo es klar wird, dass mit der Abweisung des allgemein Religiösen, weil nicht aus der Offenbarung in Christus geschöpft, zugleich das specifisch Christliche auf das allgemein Religiöse reducirt wird. Gottvertrauen, Berufstreue, und allgemeine Menschenliebe — das ist eine ungleich ärmere, dürftigere Trias als die des alten Rationalismus: Gott, Freiheit, Unsterblichkeit" (p. 11).

² *Dogmatik*, § 16.

³ On Lipsius' view of Christianity, cf. his *Dogmatik*, §§ 140–162. "Das Christenthum als geschichtliche Religion ist der Glaube an die geschichtliche Offenbarung in Jesus Christus, dem Sohne Gottes und Erlöser der Menschen. . . . Seinem geistigen Gehalte nach ist dieser Glaube die Gewissheit, dass das vollkommene religiöse Verhältniss in Jesus Christus thatsächlich offenbart, und durch ihn ebensowol für die Gemeinschaft, als für den einzelnen Gläubigen vermittelt sei" (§§ 140, 142).

"Das religiöse Princip des Christenthums ist daher das in Jesu persönlichem Selbstbewusstsein thatsächlich verwirklichte, mittelst des Glaubens an ihn als Thatsache des gemeinsamen und individuellen Bewusstseins sich beurkundende religiöse Verhältniss der Sohnschaft bei Gott, in welchem an die Stelle des Gegensatzes zwischen Gott und Mensch die Lebensgemeinschaft des Menschen mit Gott in ihrem wahrhaft geistigen Sinne, als unmittelbar persönliche Gegenwart des göttlichen Geistes im Menschengeste, getreten ist" (§ 144).

To Ritschl, as we have seen, Christianity centres in Christ. And by Christ he means the historic Christ — the person who lived and walked and taught in Palestine nineteen centuries ago, in distinction from the abstract metaphysical being with which, for good or for evil, later ages have identified him. The purity of a man's Christianity is to be tested by the extent of his loyalty to the revelation of the historic Christ. It is their failure to meet this test which draws down upon the mystics so severe a censure.

Unfortunately, however, when closely examined, the test proves to be less explicit than might be desired. The term "historic Christ" is itself ambiguous. It may be more or less broadly defined. Is it to be reduced to the picture of Jesus Christ constructed by modern critical study, when all the supernatural elements in the traditional view have been eliminated? Or does it include such facts as the virgin birth, the miracles, and the resurrection? Is the historic Christ the Christ of the Gospels, or of modern criticism, or a peculiar something midway between the two? To such questions Ritschl himself gives us no very explicit answer. While his Biblical principle would incline him to the former view, his freedom of criticism points rather to the latter, and it is not strange therefore that different members of his school should have been led to different conclusions. Thus while Wendt finds in the teaching of Jesus the norm of true Christianity,¹ and contrasts

¹ *Die Norm des echten Christentums*, pp. 30, 37, 43, 44, and especially 41. "Ich meine die rechte Antwort auf diese Fragen schon dadurch gegeben zu haben, dass ich von Anfang an gesagt habe, die *religionstift-*

Jesus and Paul to the great disadvantage of the latter,¹ Harnack includes in his idea of the Gospel the effects produced by Christ upon the life of His followers,² and finds in Paul that one of the disciples who is truest to the teaching of his Master.³ J. Weiss⁴ thinks that the

ende oder die offenbarende Lehre Jesu sei die von uns gesuchte Norm. Genauer könnte ich mich ausdrücken: die aus der religionstiftenden Absicht Jesu hervorgegangene, von ihm selbst als göttliche Offenbarung beurtheilte, in Worten und indirekt in Thaten gegebene Verkündigung Jesu vom Reiche Gottes ist die rechte Norm der christlichen Lehre."

¹ *Ibid.* p. 30. The theme is more fully developed in an article in *Zeitschrift für Theol. und Kirche*, 1894, pp. 1-78. See especially the concluding paragraph, in which, after speaking of the wealth and richness of Paul's thought, and his great services to Christian missions, to Christian doctrine, and especially to the development of Protestantism, he goes on as follows: "Aber diese Anerkennung darf uns doch nicht abhalten von der Erkenntniss, dass die Lehre Jesu an einfache Grosse, Klarheit und Wahrheit der Lehre des Paulus noch überlegen ist. Sie besitzt eine innere Einheitlichkeit, wie sie der des Paulus abgeht. Die letztere ist uns menschlich interessanter, eben wegen der verschiedenartigen Elemente, die sie einschliesst. Aber dies, was sie interessant macht, ist zugleich ihre Schwäche. Wir können gewiss sein, dass die Lehre Jesu, wenn sie nur in ihrem ursprünglichen Bestande und Sinne aufgefasst und gepredigt wird, in noch viel höherem Masse belebende und läuternde Einwirkungen auf die weitere Entwicklung des Christenthums ausüben kann und will, als wie sie je von der Lehre des Paulus ausgegangen sind."

² *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, p. 6., Eng. tr. p. 10. "Deshalb ist es unmöglich eine vollständige Antwort auf die Frage: Was ist christlich? zu gewinnen, wenn man sich lediglich auf die Predigt Jesu Christi beschränkt. Wir müssen die erste Generation seiner Jünger — die, die mit ihm gegessen und getrunken haben — hinzunehmen, und von ihnen hören, was sie an ihm erlebt haben." Nay more, we must take in the contribution of all later ages, for that with which we have here to do, is not so much a teaching as a life, which "ever kindled anew, burns now with its own flame" (p. 7, Eng. tr. p. 11).

³ *Ibid.* p. 110, Eng. tr. p. 176. "Die grosse Mehrzahl derer, die ihm nahe getreten sind, bezeugt, dass es in Wahrheit derjenige gewesen sei, der den Meister verstanden und sein Werk fortgesetzt hat. Dieses Urtheil besteht zu Recht."

⁴ *Die Nachfolge Christi und die Predigt der Gegenwart*, Göttingen, 1895.

true dogmatic formula for the present time is the "Imitation of Christ,"¹ but holds himself entirely free to remove from the picture of the Christ to be imitated whatever elements are out of keeping with the spirit of our modern life.² Kähler,³ on the other hand, attacks modern study of the life of Christ, as subjective and unscientific; sees in the Jesus of criticism a mere figment of the imagination without any basis in fact; and declares that the true historical Jesus, and the only one, is the Biblical Christ.⁴ Between these extremes stands a group of moderate men like Reischle⁵ and

¹ P. 117. "In allen diesen Beziehungen schien mir die Formel 'der Nachfolge Christi' geeignet, als zentraler Ausdruck für den christlichen Heilsstand zu dienen." Cf. pp. 181, 143. In the latter passage he objects to Hermann's phrase, "das Ueberwältigt werden vom Bilde Christi," as making the gate of entrance to the Christian life too narrow.

² Especially in all that concerns the apocalyptic and eschatological. *Ibid*, p. 168. "Indem wir so den Gedanken der Nachfolge Christi in den Rahmen der Reichgottesidee einfügen, verwenden wir diese Idee nicht in dem Wortsinne der Evangelien, sondern in der bedeutenten Abwandlung desselben, den er in der modernen Theologie empfangen hat. In der Sprache und Denkweise Jesu sind Welt und Reich Gottes absolut unvereinbare Gegensätze: die Welt muss vergehen, um dem Reiche Gottes Platz zu machen. In der modernen Theologie dagegen wird der Gedanke so gewandt, dass innerhalb der Menschenwelt eine Bundesgemeinschaft zwischen Gott und einen Teile dieser Menschheit und wieder unter diesen Menschen sich gebildet hat eben durch das Wirken Jesu — ein Bund, welcher dazu bestimmt ist allmählich die ganze Welt zu umfassen, bis er dereinst in vollkommener Weise in Jenseits sich erneuern wird." This contrast is further developed in his book, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (2d ed. Göttingen, 1900).

³ Kähler is sometimes reckoned as a Ritschlian (so by Orr, *op. cit.* p. 27). As a matter of fact, he occupies an independent position and is really to be counted one of the most influential opponents of the school. On his work, see the literature cited above, p. 267, note 1.

⁴ See his remarkable little book, *Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Christus*, 2d ed. Leipzig, 1896.

⁵ On Reischle, see the literature cited above, p. 265.

Häring,¹ recognizing the rights both of criticism and of faith, and striving, by a careful investigation of the experiences of the religious life, to discover what facts in the Biblical picture of Christ are really of vital importance for Christian faith.²

The results of recent discussions upon this and similar points are gathered to a head in Harnack's brilliant lectures on "The Essence of Christianity."³ Delivered before an audience of some six hundred students, and taken down stenographically by one of their number, they have been received with a favor which is little less than extraordinary, and are already accepted by leading members of the Ritschl school as giving the most adequate statement of the results of modern critical study which has yet appeared.⁴ We cannot better bring our

¹ On Häring, see the literature cited above, p. 266.

² The discussion has centred about such points as the virgin birth and the resurrection. From the extensive literature we may cite the following: In the *Zeitschrift für Theol. und Kirche*, Hermann: *Der geschichtliche Christus, der Grund unseres Glaubens* (1892, p. 232); Lobstein: *Der evangelische Heilsglaube an die Auferstehung Jesu Christi* (1892, p. 343); Hering: *Die dogmatische Bedeutung und der religiöse Werth der übernatürliche Geburt Christi* (1895, p. 58); Reischle: *Der Streit über die Begründung des Glaubens auf den geschichtlichen Jesus Christus* (1897, p. 171); Häring: *Gehört die Auferstehung zum Glaubensgrund?* *Amica exegese zu Professor D. M. Reischles Der Streit*, etc. (1897, p. 331); Häring und Reischle: *Glaubensgrund und Auferstehung. Ein gemeinschaftliches Schlusswort* (1898, p. 129); Vischer: *Die geschichtliche Gewissheit und der Glaube an Jesus Christus* (1898, p. 195); Sell: *Zwei Thesenreihen über geschichtliche Gewissheit und Glauben* (1898, p. 261); Häring: *Gäbe es Gewissheit des christlichen Glaubens wenn es geschichtliche Gewissheit von der Ungeschichtlichkeit der Geschichte Jesu Christi gäbe?* (1898, p. 468). Also in the *Hefte zur christlichen Welt*, Nos. 11, 32, 33, 48, by Reischle, Eck, Loofs, and Sulze.

³ *Das Wesen des Christentums*, Leipzig, 1900, Eng. tr. by Saunders, "What is Christianity?" London and New York, 1901.

⁴ Cf. Bousset, in *Theol. Rundschau*, for March, 1901, and references there given.

review to a close than by a brief summary of their more important conclusions. We may sum these up under the three heads of the novelty of Christianity, its adaptability, its universality.

And first the novelty of Christianity. Harnack is not less convinced than Ritschl of the uniqueness and originality of Jesus Christ. If we ask where we are to find the essence of Christianity, Harnack answers in a word, In Jesus Christ and in His Gospel.¹ It is Christ who is the creator of Christianity; and to understand Christianity means to know Christ. For this insight no lengthy studies are necessary; no profound researches in comparative religion; no deep delving into the mysteries of *Erkenntnisstheorie*; not even an accurate knowledge of contemporary history, however welcome the help which it may bring.² The Gospel of Jesus is at once so simple and so original that even without elaborate instructions the plain man may find his way to it. Whoever has an open eye for what is living and a true feeling for what is really great cannot fail to see it, and to distinguish it from its contemporary dress.³ The Gospel of Jesus? It is "eternal life in the

¹ P. 6, Eng. tr. p. 10.

² P. 10, Eng. tr. pp. 15, 16. "Selbst davon werden wir absehen und absehen dürfen, einleitend uns über das Judentum und seine äussere und innere Lage zu verbreiten und über die griechisch-römische Welt uns auszusprechen. Selbstverständlich werden wir nie unsern Blick ihnen gegenüber verschliessen dürfen — sie müssen uns vielmehr immer im Sinne sein — aber weitschichtige Darlegungen sind hier nicht nötig. . . . So oft ich die Evangelien wieder lese und überschlage, um so mehr treten mir die zeitgeschichtlichen Spannungen, in denen das Evangelium gestanden hat und aus denen es hervorgetreten ist, zurück."

³ P. 9, Eng. tr. p. 14.

midst of time, in the strength and before the eyes of God.”¹ It is “divine sonship spread out over the whole of life, an inner harmony with God’s kingdom, and a joyful certainty in the possession of eternal goods, and in confidence of protection from evil.”² It is all this, not as theory merely, but as experience, realizing itself first of all in the life of Jesus, and afterwards in all those who, through Him, have been brought to know themselves as at once sons of God and servants of their fellow-men. If it be objected that the ideas of Jesus may all be paralleled within the Old Testament, Harnack is willing to grant you the fact. In monotheism it is difficult to discover any new ideas. But the separation of the truth from its misleading associations, its simplification and purification, and above all its translation into life,—this is the unique achievement of Jesus; and it is in this that His originality consists.³

For the Gospel, we repeat, is not merely truth but power. It is a living thing, and as living, growing—capable of indefinite expansion and adaptation, as it is

¹ P. 5, Eng. tr. p. 8. “Ewiges Leben, mitten in der Zeit, in der Kraft und vor den Augen Gottes.”

² P. 42, Eng. tr. p. 65. “Gotteskindschaft ausgedehnt über das ganze Leben, ein innerer Zusammenschluss mit Gottes Willen und Gottes Reich und eine freudige Gewissheit im Besitz ewiger Güter und in Bezug auf den Schutz vor dem Uebel.”

³ P. 31, Eng. tr. pp. 47 and 48. “Nun fragen Sie noch einmal: ‘Was war denn das Neue?’ In der monotheistischen Religion ist diese Frage nicht am Platze. Fragen Sie vielmehr. ‘War es rein und war es kraftvoll, was hier verkündet wurde?’ Ich antworte: Suchen Sie in der ganzen Religionsgeschichte des Volkes Israel, suchen Sie in der Geschichte überhaupt, wo eine Botschaft von Gott und vom Guten so rein und so ernst—denn Reinheit und Ernst gehören zusammen—gewesen ist, wie wir sie hier hören und lesen!”

brought into contact with the ever changing environment. This is the second point to note in Harnack's view of Christianity. There are but two possibilities. "Either the Gospel is in all points identical with its first form, in which case it is a transient phenomenon, appearing in time only to pass away again, or else it presents eternal truth in historically changing forms."¹ The latter is the true view. If we would understand the nature of Christianity, we must not stop with the teaching of Jesus, nor even with the experiences of the apostles. We must follow Christianity throughout all its changing historic forms, in order that in the great school of time we may learn what is the permanent principle in the midst of its variations, the abiding truth which outlives all change.² Having found the common element in all these varying appearances, we must test it by the Gospel; and conversely, we must bring the principles of the Gospel to the test of history.³ Neither alone is sufficient. Both together will give us the truth. In such sentences, we find the disciple of Ritschl making room for the truth for which Hegelianism stands.

To follow Harnack in his application of this method in detail would carry us too far. Beginning with a study of the Gospel of Jesus,⁴ which he finds may be summed up in the three phrases, the kingdom of

¹ P. 8 *sq.*, Eng. tr. p. 13 *sq.*

² Pp. 6-9, Eng. tr. p. 10 *sq.*

³ P. 10, Eng. tr. p. 15. "Das Gemeinsame in allen diesen Erscheinungen, kontrolliert an dem Evangelium, und wiederum die Grundzüge des Evangeliums, kontrolliert an der Geschichte, werden uns, so dürfen wir hoffen, dem Kerne der Sache nahe bringen."

⁴ Pp. 32-50, Eng. tr. p. 49 *sq.*

God and its coming; the Fatherhood of God and the worth of the individual human soul; the better righteousness and the law of love, he follows its fortunes through the changing centuries: in the Apostolic church; through the rise of the old Catholic church, to the more developed forms of Catholicism, Greek, and Roman; and, finally, in its latest dress, in Protestantism. In spite of all the corruptions and misunderstandings to which it has been exposed, intellectual, ethical, ecclesiastical, he finds that it still maintains its vitality and power. There has never been a day, even in the darkest period of the Middle Ages, or in the most superstitious age of Greek Catholicism, when the Gospel of Christ has not had its witnesses and its confessors,¹ and the variety of their outward condition and of their intellectual environment has but served to make more impressive the unity of the Christian experience. Christ's message to the men of the nineteenth century is in substance the same as that to the men of the first. He speaks to the same needs, satisfies the same longings, answers the same questions, and the net outcome of the historic process is to set His supremacy in a clearer light and to establish it on a firmer footing than ever before.²

This leads us to the last point in Harnack's characterization of Christianity—its universality. It is true that he speaks somewhat disparagingly of apologetic presentations,³ nor does he think that comparative

¹ P. 187, Eng. tr. p. 298.

² Pp. 188, 189, Eng. tr. p. 300 *sq.*

³ P. 4 *sq.*, Eng. tr. p. 6 *sq.* Harnack objects to most apologetic presentations that they have not adequately recognized the simplicity of the

religion in its present form has any very considerable contribution to make to the solution of our problem.¹ He contents himself with the more modest task of studying Christianity historically in order that he may learn its own answer to our question as to its nature.² But the rejection of apologetics is only in appearance. As Ritschl rejects the absoluteness of a false philosophy that he may present the authority of Christianity more effectively in his own way, so Harnack dispenses with an inadequate apologetic that he may replace it with a better one. There is more apology in Harnack's history than in twenty volumes of the Bridgewater treatises. No presentation of Christianity, he tells us, is true to history, which ignores the life experiences of its adherents.³ And it is as one of these that Harnack writes. The historian becomes unconsciously a pleader, and the sentences in which he describes the Gospel glow with the fire of a personal testimony. Here is a man who believes that he has found the key which unlocks the mystery of life and who invites his fellow-men to share with him his glad discovery.⁴

Christianity, the religion for man as man — this is the conclusion to which all Harnack's studies lead. In

Gospel, the fact that Christianity is "Etwas Hohes, Einfaches und auf einen Punkt Bezogenes," p. 5, Eng. tr. p. 8.

¹ P. 5 *sq.*, Eng. tr. p. 8 *sq.*

² P. 4, Eng. tr. p. 6. "Was ist Christentum? — lediglich im historischen Sinn wollen wir diese Frage hier zu beantworten versuchen." Cf. p. 6, Eng. tr. p. 10.

³ P. 4, Eng. tr. p. 6. "Der Lebenserfahrung die aus erlebter Geschichte erworben ist."

⁴ Cf. the beautiful passage, p. 188, Eng. tr. p. 300, beginning "Dass ich einmal von meiner eigenen Erfahrung spreche."

the Gospel of Jesus, we have the perfect expression of that for which all men, more or less consciously, seek; the complete attainment of that toward which from the beginning the race has been blindly groping.¹ Harnack recognizes the difficulty of making a general conception of religion. He can understand the position of those to whom the word denotes simply "an empty spot within us, which each man fills out in his own way, and some do not even recognize at all."² But this is not his own view. He is convinced that in the deepest depths of humanity there is something common, which, out of division and obscurity, has little by little struggled up throughout the course of history to unity and clearness. He believes Augustine in the right when he cries, "Thou, Lord, hast created us for Thee, and our heart is restless till it finds rest in Thee."³ This longing Christ satisfies and thereby shows Himself not merely the Saviour of the individual,⁴ but the centre of the religious history of the race.⁵

Here we must bring our historical survey to a close. With this recognition of the *anima naturaliter Christiana*, of a preparation for Christianity within the very nature of man, we find Harnack, even while insisting with Ritschl upon the originality of Christianity, ad-

¹ P. 11, Eng. tr. p. 17. "Ich zweifle nicht, dass schon der Stifter den Menschen ins Auge gefasst hat, in welcher äusseren Lage er sich auch immer befinden mochte—den Menschen, der im Grunde immer derselbe bleibt." Cf. p. 44, Eng. tr. p. 69.

² P. 6, Eng. tr. p. 9.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Pp. 43, 44, Eng. tr. p. 67 *sq.*

⁵ P. 189, Eng. tr. p. 301.

mitting the complementary truth for which the speculative school contend. This admission, with its promise of a better understanding between the two opposing parties, may serve as a convenient introduction to our concluding chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

1. *Present State of the Question.*

As we look back over the history of Christian thought, we are struck by the persistence of two contrasted tendencies. On the one hand, there is the disposition to emphasize the supernatural character of Christianity, and to magnify the contrast between it and other religions; on the other, the tendency to lay stress upon the points of resemblance between Christianity and the ethnic faiths, and to ground the supremacy of the former in the fact that it realizes a universal ideal.

These two tendencies find clear expression in the history of definition. Taking the definitions which we have passed in review, it would be easy to divide them into two classes, according to the relative prominence which they give to the natural or the supernatural in their estimate of Christianity. The antithesis is not confined to any particular age or period of Christian thought. It runs through them all. Justin is matched by Marcion; Abelard by Thomas Aquinas; Kant by Butler; Hegel by Ritschl. Men who have little else in common find here an unexpected bond of union, and

theologians otherwise in sympathy part company at this point.

And yet the contrast may easily be exaggerated. Each point of view is too deeply rooted in experience to make it possible for its advocates wholly to overlook the other. The schoolman declares that the being of God surpasses the power of human reason to comprehend, only to make place for a natural theology in which he attempts a rational demonstration of the existence of the Absolute. Kant is persuaded that religion should contain nothing but what each individual should be able to attain through the light of his own reason, apart from all historic mediation. Yet he admits that there has been but one Christ, and hails Him as founder of the universal church. Ritschl ridicules the attempt to gain a conception of the nature of religion from a comparison of the ethnic faiths, but he does not deny that in Christianity, when it is found, we have the revelation of the universal religious ideal. Biedermann bids us distinguish in Christianity between principle and person, yet does not doubt that in the person of the Christ the principle of true religion has for the first time found perfect expression. Thus while the advocates of the extraordinary in Christianity recognize its intimate connection with the facts of common life, those whose search is for laws of universal validity are the first to admit its uniqueness.

The problem of the definition of Christianity is at bottom the problem of the reconciliation of these two divergent elements. What is wanted is a conception which shall be at once supernatural and natural, or, to

put the matter less technically, which shall exhibit the distinctive features of Christianity in their universal relations and significance.

The history of Christian thought has shown a steady progress both in the apprehension of this problem and in its solution. The two parties have been gradually drawing closer to each other, until to-day the difference is rather one of emphasis and of proportion than of fundamental conviction. It will be our object in this closing chapter to indicate wherein this growing consensus consists, and to consider its bearing upon the task immediately before us. We shall inquire in the first place, what modern thought has to tell us of the conditions of the problem, and secondly, what steps have been taken in its solution. The first is a matter of philosophy, the second of history.

2. *The Contribution of Philosophy. Christianity as the Absolute Religion the Goal of Religious Progress.*

If we ask what contribution modern philosophy has to make to the definition of Christianity, the answer can be very simply given. It is the conception of the Absolute as the goal of progress. What may be called the static conception of the Absolute has had its day. Whatever else the ultimate reality may be, it is not dead. The God of modern philosophy is a living God. The world is the scene of change, growth, progress. Development is the law of life, and the way to learn the nature of the mysterious power who is at the heart of the process is to discover the end to which the

process tends. The true meaning of the Absolute is teleological.

The bearing of this upon our problem is plain. If Christianity is to make good its claim to be the absolute religion, it must be able to show that it is the goal of religious progress. That is to say, it must be able to show that the ideals which it reveals, the motives to which it appeals, and the forces which it sets in motion, are such as to promote that type of the religious life toward which, so far as we are able to judge, religious progress is tending. This is the meaning which modern thought puts into the phrase, the absolute religion.

When Ritschl criticizes those who seek to discover the nature of true religion by taking elements indiscriminately from all the historic faiths, in order to combine them into an artificial unity which they are pleased to call the absolute religion, he is entirely in the right. The problem is too complex and the issues too fine, to admit of so simple a solution. But it does not follow that religion has no unity, and that the effort to relate Christianity to earlier forms of the religious life is vain. A river may have many tributaries, and they differ, not only in the volume of water they carry, but in the number and extent of the obstacles they encounter. Some are broad, others narrow; some are rapid, others sluggish; some are choked with rubbish and fouled with decaying leaves; others run free and are crystal clear. Some bear great ships upon their bosom; others contain scarce enough to quench the thirst of a single man. But the water in each comes from the same sky, and

the goal to which all are bound is the open sea. So the different faiths, diverse as they seem, are forms of the same religious life, obey the same unchanging laws, and aspire to the same unseen goal. We may illustrate this along several different lines. And first in connection with the idea of God.

If we retrace the religious history of humanity, we find a gradual movement toward the recognition of one supreme Deity. From the early animism which can scarcely be said to possess a god at all, we pass to henotheism,¹ the stage where one or another of the local gods is raised above his fellows and made the object of supreme worship. Through the combination of many such local gods arises polytheism, with its Pantheon of allied and related deities. As man grows in civilization, and becomes more conscious of the unity of the world, such external and artificial devices prove unsatisfactory, and we find an increasing tendency to believe in a single all-controlling God, who is Lord of the entire universe, and whom theological thought tends to identify with the Absolute of philosophy. In its doctrine of one supreme God, the Creator and Ruler of the entire universe, Christianity gathers to a head the results of this earlier development, and shows itself fitted to satisfy the deepest religious needs of man.

¹ The word "henotheism" was originally used by Max Müller, to denote "a successive belief in single supreme gods," as distinguished from polytheism, where many gods are worshipped side by side (see his *Origin and Development of Religion*, New York, 1879, p. 261). It is, however, often used by writers on religion in a broader sense to denote a form of religion in which worship of a single god coexists with the recognition, but not the worship, of others.

We note a similar progress in respect to the ethical character of religion. At first religion and ethics are independent. The god is but one of many beings with whom man stands in relation. And if he faithfully perform his religious duties of sacrifice or prayer, it is a matter of indifference, so far as religion is concerned, how he deals with his fellow-men. But with the discovery of the unity of God, this early dualism disappears. The Deity is seen to control all of life, and the ethical codes which govern man's relations to his fellows receive a religious sanction, and are put under religious control. The law of God includes my duty to my brother, and if I am at fault in my dealing with him, I sin against God. This moralization of religion may be studied in many different fields — most clearly of all in the religion of Israel. In Christianity it reaches its culmination. Here religion and ethics have become so completely one, that it is impossible, even in thought, to separate them.

Further evidence of progress appears in connection with the objects sought in religion. At first these are almost entirely external, such as wealth, success, recovery from sickness, victory in battle. But, with a deeper insight into the inner life, and a juster estimate of spiritual values, other interests arise. Man's great enemy is seen to be himself, and his supreme need, the renewal and purification of the inner life. So redemption comes to include deliverance from spiritual evils as well as from external calamities. Religions as widely separated as Buddhism and the religion of Israel bear witness to this transformation of the redemptive idea.

Christianity, entering into the heritage of Israel, sees in God one who looks upon the heart, and declares that even the man dead in trespasses and sins is not beyond the reach of his redemptive grace.

Finally, we note in the religious history of mankind a tendency to pass from the local and the limited to the universal. Religion, which is at first an affair of the family, the tribe, or the nation, breaks the narrow bonds which have confined it, and is seen to be an affair of humanity as a whole. As there is but one true God, so there can be but one true religion, and he who has attained to a knowledge of this religion is in duty bound to share his experience with his fellow-men. So we have the birth of the missionary impulse, and before the growing propaganda of the larger faiths, the local religions which have hitherto sufficed prove unable to maintain themselves. The outward expansion has its complement within, as the religious estimate spreads itself over all of life, and endeavors to make its own the territory which had hitherto been regarded as the exclusive domain of art or ethics or philosophy. Nothing less than a complete control over the whole of human life is able to satisfy the religious aspiration. Even the barrier of the grave proves insufficient, and in the hope of immortality the way is opened for the development of an ideal which is strictly speaking universal.¹

¹ We are well aware of the danger of generalization in a field as vast and complex as that of the history of religion. Yet, without generalization of some kind, progress in knowledge is impossible. What it is here intended to assert is simply that so far as we find evidence of progress at all in the history of religion (and in the greater religions, whose history we are able to follow for a long period of time, some prog-

It is the merit of the Hegelian philosophy of religion that it so clearly exhibits the universal relationships of Christianity. Hegel conceived of Christianity as the culmination of the movement of humanity as a whole toward God. This is his permanent contribution to religious thought. Thoughtful Christians to-day are persuaded that if their religion is to prove its right to universal authority, it must take up into itself the elements of truth in all the historic faiths, while at the same time giving them something peculiar to itself which they lack. The only difference of opinion is as to the method in which the distinctive contribution of Christianity can most effectively be shown.

But we have lingered long enough on the threshold. From the conditions of the problem, we must pass to steps which have been taken in its solution. This will be the subject of our next inquiry.

3. *The Contribution of History. Christianity as a Historic Religion, the Progressive Realization of the Supremacy of Christ.*

It is one thing to assert that Christianity is the absolute religion. It is another to point out in detail

ress can hardly be denied), it is along the lines here suggested. The fact that there are wide areas of religious history in which stagnation, or even retrogression, is the rule, is no more argument against the truth of our conclusion, than the presence of similar areas in secular history is a legitimate reason for losing faith in the progress of humanity as a whole. In the one case as in the other we have to do with a judgment of faith. We bring our own ideals with us to the history we would interpret, and all that can fairly be asked of us is (1) that we do not ignore or misread the facts we see, and (2) that the evidence be sufficient to make our faith a reasonable one.

the qualities which justify the claim. Here the real difficulty of definition begins. Is Christianity monotheistic? So is Mohammedanism. Does it present a lofty ethical standard? The same is true of Confucianism. Does it offer salvation to the sinful and needy. Judaism also is a religion of redemption. Does it assert a universal authority. The claim of Buddhism is no less sweeping. Why not as legitimately make these facts a basis for the admission of their absoluteness? If attention is called to the imperfections of the ethnic faiths, is it not the fact that Christianity itself has realized its own ideal in very unequal degree? Its monotheism has often been obscured by the worship of saints, of the Virgin Mary, even of Jesus Christ Himself, and in some extreme forms of trinitarian statement is scarcely to be distinguished from tritheism. Its ethics have lost the simplicity which characterized the teaching of its founder, and through the casuistical distinctions of many of its moralists, the commonest principles of right and wrong have been turned upside down. As a religion of redemption it has no doubt done great things, but it is not fair to take account of its successes and ignore its failures, and the presence of many in Christian countries living in misery and sin would seem to show that there are limits even to Christ's power to help. As for its universalism, that remains after all only a claim, which is still disputed by Mohammedanism and Buddhism. In view of these patent facts, the question is a fair one what Christianity offers which the other religions do not which justifies us in giving to it an absolute character which we deny to them.

Here modern scholarship, which has raised the question, brings us unexpected help in its answer. From the many imperfect and conflicting forms which history discloses, it points us back to the unique personality from whom the Christian religion takes its name. Granted that Christianity has no exclusive possession of the qualities which we have passed in review; granted that it does not realize them equally in all its historic manifestations, it is yet a fact that it embodies them in an object at once so definite and so enduring as both to satisfy the highest religious needs of the individual, and to provide a standard by which, according to the common agreement of the best and wisest of mankind, the religious progress of humanity is to be tested. This object is Jesus of Nazareth. He is the distinctive feature of the Christian religion. In restoring Him to His rightful place in Christian thought and life, modern scholarship has taken the greatest single step in the direction of a scientific definition of Christianity.

This fact is not always as clearly perceived as its importance deserves. In the minute investigations with which modern criticism has to do, it is easy to lose one's sense of proportion. Questions of literary analysis and of historical dependence admit a variety of answer which seems to preclude certainty. Each logical possibility has its advocate, and the discrepancy of the critics forms a fruitful theme for conservative satire. Even sober students like Kähler¹ ask in all good faith whether there is any consensus, and whether the Jesus of crit-

¹ In his book, "*Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche biblische Christus.*"

icism is not at least as fictitious a figure as the Christ of faith. But such a judgment is superficial; it is the result of too close contact. When one withdraws a moment from the details of critical study and asks what is the outcome of the labor of the last fifty years, the result is reassuring. We have time to touch on a few only of the more important points.

And first of all, the humanity of Christ has recovered its rightful place in Christian thinking. We are no longer content to assert it as a doctrine; we wish to realize it as a fact. Through the mists of dogma and of tradition under which He has so long been hidden, the gracious figure of the Man of Galilee begins again to be seen; and, as the outlines take on greater and ever greater distinctness, we are brought more and more under the spell of His simplicity, His originality, His greatness. We see the environment in which He lived, the quiet home at Nazareth, the simple life in the synagogue and at the carpenter's bench. We reconstruct the conditions of the time, political, social, ecclesiastical. We enter the world of thought in which His contemporaries lived. Instead of massing chief priests and Pharisees and scribes together in one common category of prejudice and evil, we understand the various elements which entered into the making of the complex national life. We see the hard, practical common-sense of the Sadducee, and that the Pharisee, bigoted as he was, was yet often honest and sincere, and in his own way kept alive the religious aspiration to which Jesus appealed. Instead of regarding the Roman world as one unrelieved mass of corruption, we distinguish

between its evil and its good. We see its festering sores, its cruelty, its selfishness ; but, at the same time, we feel its great, dumb longing for the better life which was so soon to dawn. In this human world we see Jesus walking as a man among men ; growing in knowledge with growing experience ; deepening His sympathies through contact with suffering ; winning men by the charm of a personality of unexampled frankness and simplicity ; clothing His teaching with familiar imagery taken from the scenes of daily life ; going at last to a death which was the inevitable result of the clash of two great ideals, only to appear again to the faith and love of His disciples, and to carry on through their devotion a work a thousand-fold greater than it had been given Him to do within the narrow limits of His earthly life.

We have a better understanding of the Gospel of Jesus. The Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the worth of the individual human soul, greatness through service, salvation through sacrifice, the kingdom of God as the goal of humanity, — these truths, so inexhaustible in their richness and freshness, are seen to be His peculiar contribution to the religious thought of the race. Not that they were without preparation in the past — no truth comes unheralded — but that they found in Him a clearness of conception, and received through Him a definiteness of expression, which after nineteen centuries is still unsurpassed. To-day, as in each preceding generation, men turn to Him with wonder and reverence as the supreme religious teacher of the world. The more we know of the environment in which He

moved, the more convincing becomes the proof of the originality of His Gospel. To appreciate His doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, we need to set it over against the transcendent Deity of contemporary Judaism; to understand His doctrine of the brotherhood of man, we must realize the national limitations which hampered the men of His day in their social aspirations. No one can measure what it means that Jesus should have eaten and drunk with publicans and sinners, till he has entered the world of thought in which salvation seemed the peculiar prerogative of the righteous. All previous estimates are reversed by the new teacher. For the desire to rule we are given the privilege of service; the greatest becomes the minister; and the path to sovereignty leads by way of the cross.

Greater than His teaching is the character of Jesus. Here, too, Christian thought owes a great debt to modern scholarship. When Christ is conceived from the side of the Absolute, it is impossible to appreciate His moral greatness. But look upon Him as a man of like passions and temptations with ourselves, and the full majesty of His character makes itself felt. A man who could live in His world and do what He did is unique. Where did He get His insight? What explains that self-mastery unexampled? This only is clear that the Gospel and the character of Jesus belong together. He could speak of God as He did because He had had experience of God in His own soul, and knew whereof He affirmed. He could transform the Jewish ideal of earthly glory and dominion into the Christian kingdom of service because He had learned in His own life that the things which are unseen are eternal.

The same causes which have led to a new appreciation of the character of Jesus have given us a new insight into the significance of His claim. Here again a frank recognition of the true humanity of Jesus is the necessary condition of realizing His uniqueness. Humble and lowly as He was, clear-eyed and just in His perception of moral values, frank to recognize the rights of the least of His brethren to the same access to God which He claimed for Himself, He was yet conscious of a unique relation to the Father and a unique function in mediating Him to men. He recognized in Himself the centre of human history, and looked for a day when all men should be gathered into the kingdom of which He was the head. This is what the Messiahship of Jesus means, an authority spiritualized, transformed, reborn, but authority none the less. In proclaiming Jesus as Lord the Christian Church has made no departure from the Gospel of Jesus.

Thus it is in Jesus Christ, understanding by the term all that we have here passed in review — life, character, authority, Gospel, that we find the distinctive mark of Christianity. With His supremacy in the religious life of humanity, its claim to be the final religion stands or falls.

But this raises at once a new and perplexing question. When we apply this test to the study of historic Christianity we find a startling discrepancy. The religion which goes by the name of Christ seems widely to depart from the principles of its founder, both in teaching and practice. Sometimes the variation is greater, sometimes less, but variation of some kind and to some

degree can hardly be denied. Other ideals are recognized; other forces dominant. The very name Christ has taken on a new meaning. Instead of suggesting the gracious human figure whose traits we have tried to describe, it has come to denote certain abstract philosophical conceptions, such as Logos or Absolute, the meaning of which varies from age to age and as to the exact significance of which the wisest theologians disagree. We have already traced the process by which the Christianity of Christ was replaced by the religion we call Catholicism, and seen that the result has been to empty the term Christianity of its original meaning and to open it to a series of changes which seem to elude all possibility of scientific control.

What shall be done in view of such a situation? Shall we continue uncritically to apply the same word to phenomena which have really nothing in common? Shall we deny the right of historic Christianity to the name it has borne so long because it contains elements foreign to the religion of Jesus? Or is there some better way; some principle running through the entire process, which, when once perceived, enables us to relate the later developments to the original fact from which they took their rise? It is the latter conclusion toward which modern scholarship seems to be tending.

To understand Christianity, it tells us, we must follow the Gospel of Jesus throughout its entire history, and note the different forms which it has assumed as it has passed from one environment to another through the changing centuries. We have not exhausted the significance of Christ when we have studied His life and

recorded His teaching. The greatest fact still remains to be reckoned with, and that is His influence in the world. Through all the centuries He has been drawing men to Himself. His disciples have come out of the most various surroundings, national, intellectual, ethical. Not all have understood Him equally, or been equally true to that which they have understood. Often His Gospel has had to fight its way in an alien environment. Always it has had to clothe itself in such forms as were given by the thought of the time. To the philosopher it has assumed a philosophic dress. From Plato it has borrowed his ideas ; from Kant his criticism. Nor have its practical variations been less striking. To the statesman it has been a law ; to the moralist a discipline ; to the saint a passion. Among its prophets are to be found types as diverse as Francis and Hildebrand, Luther and Loyola, Edwards and Paton. Thus changing with the changing centuries, it is not to be identified with any of its passing forms. Yet it is not therefore vague or indefinite. Wherever men have been touched by the spirit of Jesus, and live for the ends for which He gave Himself, there it is to be found. It is itself the spirit of Jesus made incarnate in human lives. In every age this spirit has been the life of the church. Abiding as the permanent element in Christian history, it gives the unity for which else we search in vain. Would we express in a sentence what makes out the genius of Christianity as a historic religion we cannot do so better than by saying that it is the progressive realization, in thought as in life, of the supremacy of Christ.

In this idea the two great conceptions of Christianity whose conflict has so largely engaged us find their reconciliation. Hegel is right when he conceives of Christianity as a universal process in which all things minister to a single end. But it is a process more complex and less uniform than his philosophy allows. For the logical unfolding of the immanent idea we need to substitute the struggle of a spiritual principle with a resisting, and often hostile, environment. To understand Christianity means to discover that principle and to follow it in its victorious, yet often painful and always laborious course. We are not obliged to find all things in Christian history good. Evil has its place, and error, and dull, stolid indifference. It is not strange that in the first reaction from Hegel's exaggerated optimism these aspects of Christian history should have received undue emphasis. It is not strange that men, when weary with the shallowness and artificiality of much so-called Christianity, should have turned their backs upon it in disgust, in order to bathe their spirits again in the perennial spring in which all that is truly Christian has its source. In comparison with the beauty and simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus, how could the later dogmatic Christianity seem other than a usurper? To-day a juster estimate is possible. The attempt to destroy dogmatic Christianity is giving place to the more fruitful effort to understand it. We see the good which it contains as well as the evil, and recognize that in the development of Christian thought even those parts which seem to us less honorable have a necessary part to play. Ideas in themselves indifferent or even hostile

may be so transformed by the spirit of Christ as to serve for generations as the vehicles of His Gospel. What is needed is not denunciation, but insight; not polemic, but sympathy. To discover under the formulæ, which seem so dead and lifeless, the spiritual realities for which they stand; to distinguish, within the inexhaustible heritage of the past, those utterances which have really had their day from those which possess permanent value and meaning; to break up the deposit of Catholic doctrine into its elements that we may win from the indefiniteness of its official teaching a clear vision of the forces which animate and inspire its spiritual life; in short, to find the Christ in Christianity, — this is the present task of Christian scholarship.

Take, for example, the idea of the Logos, which for so many generations furnished the framework for the Christian confession of the divinity of Christ. When one considers the changes wrought by this idea in Christian faith; how, under its influence, the historic Jesus was all but forgotten, and His place taken by an abstract philosophic conception, coming out of a world of thought which had little or nothing in common with Christianity, it is easy to become impatient, and to see in the dogmatic movement of the third and following centuries something wholly foreign to the genius of the religion of Jesus. But a careful study leads to a juster estimate. We see in this philosophy the mode of thinking natural to the time, the form in which the Christian faith must express itself, if it were to gain the allegiance of the cultivated men of the day. To the Greek the Logos was the principle of divine revelation,

the means through which a God, otherwise remote and inaccessible, gained access to and contact with His world. But the Logos was but a principle, an idea, an abstraction remote from common life and thought. The Christian found this principle incarnate in the man Jesus, and proclaimed Him as the Saviour for a world in need. Thus He gained a hearing for His Gospel from men who would otherwise have turned a deaf ear to His appeal. Reading the life story of a Justin, an Athanasius, and an Augustine, we see how this idea, which to us seems so alien, lent itself naturally to the expression of the Christian spirit, and, in spite of all differences of viewpoint, see in them Christian brothers, leading the same divine life, and serving the same divine master as ourselves.

Or to take an illustration from the world of practice: To our modern view, with its keen sense of the sanctity of all life, monasticism seems a phenomenon hard to reconcile with the spirit of Christianity. It is difficult to imagine a greater contrast than that between Jesus of Nazareth, touching life on all its sides, spending His days in the familiar haunts of men, companion of the fishermen in their boats, welcome guest at the marriage feast; and the lonely hermit, practising fasting and self-laceration in the desert, or the scarcely less lonely monk, turning his back on his duties as citizen and patriot, in order to find in the solitude of his cell unbroken leisure for the cultivation of his own spiritual life. But here again, a better acquaintance with the facts leads to a revision of this hasty judgment. When we understand the conditions out of which monasticism

was born, we recognize that it was the natural channel through which, in earlier centuries, the more earnest spirit, seeking to protest against the worldliness and corruption of a political Christianity, should utter itself. And when we follow its history, and note the great work which it has done for civilization and learning; when we see the Benedictines hewing forests, and turning desert places into gardens; when we recall the great reformation which had its impulse in Clugny; when we see the Dominican reviving the preaching office, and the Franciscan ministering to the poor; when we consider what treasures would have been lost to the world if it had not been for the labors of the lonely scribes whose ceaseless vigils kept the lamp of knowledge burning through the dark ages; when we remember that the teachers of Europe for centuries were monks, and that without their help the universities could not have done their work; above all, when we rehearse the rôle of great characters who have worn the religious habit, from Benedict in the sixth century to Mère Angelique and her nuns of Port Royal in the seventeenth, we grow impatient of any definition of Christianity which has not a place of honor for men and women like these.

Even the great antithesis which runs through Christian history, that between the Catholic and the Protestant spirit, proves less intractable when looked at from this point of view. We would not seek to minimize the importance of this difference. It is not easy to exaggerate the contrast between the man who finds the essence of religion in unquestioned obedience to external authority, whatever its commands, and the man

who believes that God deals with men as sons, and therefore gives them a message such that each can understand it for himself. Where a church claims to decide, as of divine right, how each man shall approach God, and what he shall believe concerning Him, there can be no doubt that it has broken with the spirit of Christianity, if the teaching and practice of Jesus sheds any light as to what Christianity is.

But because the Catholic spirit, when pushed to its logical extreme, may easily become unchristian, it does not follow that this is true of all its manifestations. Catholicism is the outgrowth of permanent human tendencies, and fulfils a necessary function in the life of man. Without its conservatism, much precious truth might have been lost, and energies, needed to perform some great task for God and for humanity, have been dissipated in the ineffective rivalries of individualism. Not all men, or all ages, are equally mature. Many are unable to stand alone. For such the tradition of the church proves a help, not a hindrance; a staff, by whose aid they are able to walk more rapidly and more surely along the pathway of Christian service. History shows that within the capacious bosom of the church Catholic room has been found for every one of the Christian graces. It has been the mother of the great reformers. Protestantism itself is its child.

Discrimination, then, is needed, here most of all. Christianity is the monopoly of no church and of no creed. Whatever the ecclesiastical name, each great division of Christendom shows the same struggle between the conservative and the radical; the traditionalist and

the man of present prophetic insight. Historic Protestantism has its Catholics, and the church Catholic its Protestants. We need to put away all party spirit ; all pride of sect, or name, or opinion ; that in all the churches, as among those who stand outside of all, we may find the men who have been touched by the spirit of Jesus, and in the forms natural to their day and place, strive to realize the ends for which He gave His life. When we have done this, we shall have found the essence of Christianity.

To sum up : *Christianity, as modern Christian thought understands it, is the religion of divine sonship and human brotherhood revealed and realized through Jesus Christ. As such it is the fulfilment and completion of all earlier forms of religion, and the appointed means for the redemption of mankind through the realization of the kingdom of God. Its central figure is Jesus Christ, who is not only the revelation of the divine ideal for man, but also, through the transforming influence which He exerts over His followers, the most powerful means of realizing that ideal among men. The possession in Christ of the supreme revelation of God's love and power constitutes the distinctive mark of Christianity, and justifies its claim to be the final religion.*

4. Conclusion. *Significance of the Results Attained.*

We have reached the end of our journey. It only remains in conclusion to ask, What is the value of the results attained ?

There are three distinct standpoints from which a definition of Christianity may be judged, that of philosophy, that of science, and that of practical life. For each it has its value, but the value is not the same for each. Let us see if we can discriminate between them.

(a.) From the point of view of philosophy the absoluteness of Christianity is a hypothesis, like any other philosophic theory, which must be tested by its ability to explain all the facts, and as to the truth or falsehood of which the final decision belongs to the future. The significance of a scientific definition of Christianity from this standpoint is that it states the Christian position with such clearness and precision as enables the test to be made. It shows us what Christianity claims to be, on what it relies to justify its claim, and hence enables us to indicate the conditions through the fulfilment of which alone the final proof is possible.

We have already seen what these conditions are, and need not here repeat them. We have seen how much more complex and intricate are the issues involved than was apparent to the uncritical view of an earlier and less discriminating philosophy. The proof of Christianity is to us no longer simply a theoretical matter, to be tested by logical argument or rational demonstration, as in the case of a problem of algebra or a theorem of geometry. We have seen that religion is a part of life, and that the only way for Christianity to prove itself the final religion is to show itself supreme in life. It must lay hold of men both as individuals and in the mass; it must win them to its faith by kindling their enthusiasm. Amid the strife of values

and of ideals which make up the marvellous unity we call life, it must show that there is nothing to be compared with Jesus Christ; that the answer which He gives to the problem of existence is still the most satisfactory answer; that the motives by which He appeals to the conscience and lays hold upon the will are still the most powerful motives; that the emotions which He stirs and the passions which He kindles still burn with an intenser fire than any others which are known to men. This is the only possible, the only convincing apology. To demonstrate the truth of Christianity as a philosophic theory means to show that this is the outcome to which the entire process of the universe tends.'

This indicates to us what must be the real task of the Christian apologist. Not to attempt the impossible by seeking a demonstration of the absoluteness of Christianity which shall need no further correction or supplement — to each age belongs its own apologetic — but to vindicate the supremacy of Christ for our time by showing His adequacy to supply our present need. It is to set Him forth in His beauty and His simplicity, cleared of the misconceptions by which His personality has been so often obscured, that in our day as in the days that are past men may be led to reverence His greatness and to give themselves to His discipleship. It is to restate the principles of His kingdom, freed from the local setting, Jewish or Greek, in which earlier ages have clothed them, that they may be seen to be of a truth the social gospel needed for our age. It is to enter sympathetically into the real meaning of the

teachers who still hold aloof from Christianity, recognizing the truth for which each stands, and showing that in Christ alone it finds its most complete and adequate expression. It is to recognize the spirit of Jesus wherever it is found, among those called by His name as among those who profess they know Him not, that from a study of the progress of His kingdom and the ever-growing acceptance of His principles we may win new confidence in His ultimate supremacy, and gain new enthusiasm for service in His cause.

(b.) From philosophy we pass to science. Here too our definition has a value of its own.

From the point of view of science, the definition of Christianity is a report of progress in the understanding of Christ. If Christianity be in truth what we have called it, the progressive realization of the supremacy of Christ, it is most important for each generation to compare its own Christianity with that of its predecessors, that it may take account of the gain which has been made. True progress is never wantonly destructive. It has its roots in the past, and draws its nourishment from the stores of supply which have been laid up for it through the ages. The function of the definition of Christianity is to gather to a head the new truth which has come to each age from its own study of Christ, and to apply it to the interpretation of what has gone before.

So we find men in all the schools seeking to make earnest with the Christological principle; taking the new insight which has come to them through modern study of the life of Christ and applying it to the

traditional doctrines, to see how they stand the test. Sometimes consciously and deliberately, with a full realization of the significance of the step; often by a process of unconscious reinterpretation, old doctrines are being restated, and forgotten truths brought out into the light.

Under this influence the thought of God is being transformed. We still see in God with the Greek theologians the ultimate reality of the universe, the Absolute in whom thought rests, and toward whom aspiration strives. We still confess with Calvin that the will of God is the supreme law, back of which no man can press. But we have learned from Christ to call this Supreme Being Father, and to see in His will the expression of a character like that of Jesus Christ. For the abstract Absolute of philosophy we substitute the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we confess His sovereignty, we mean that the principles of Jesus are some day to dominate the world. When we speak of the incarnation, we mean that in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, simple, human, brotherly as we have learned to see it, God is revealing to all who have eyes to see what He Himself is like, and what He would fain have all men become.

With the change in our idea of God, our thought of man is correspondingly altered. Sonship takes on a larger meaning, as we realize more clearly the character of our Father. We still recognize man's dependence, his littleness and helplessness apart from God; but the recognition loses its terrors as in Christ we perceive what man may become. The friendly and intimate

relationships of the religious life receive new significance, as we realize that God deals with men as sons, able to understand in a measure the great work which He has set for Himself, and through free self-consecration to make it their own. We see Him through all the centuries training men for Himself, speaking to them in tones clearer and ever clearer, through prophet and seer, through statesman and law-giver, through priest and king, till at last in His own Son He has given the perfect revelation of His will, and set as the goal the transformation of humanity into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

In the light of these fundamental truths, the special theological doctrines fall easily into place. The Bible is seen to be the record of God's progressive self-revelation, having its unity in the Christ to whom it points, and of whom it witnesses. The church is the company of all those in every age who are joined to Christ in faith and love, and who labor for the ends which He seeks. Sin is any lack of conformity to the spirit of Christ. Salvation is the establishment of right relations with God through the renewal of the filial spirit, and the creation of Christlike character.

Thus all along the line, we find the distinctive elements in the Christian experience receiving fresh emphasis. Instead of the abstract terms of the older theology, drawn from metaphysics or logic or law, we see men seeking a more concrete, a more ethical, in a word, a more personal expression of Christianity.

It is important to realize that the theological reconstruction thus alluded to is not simply a matter of

individual interest or significance: it has a distinct scientific value. It witnesses to the new forces which are moving in Christian history, and the new ideals by which the church is animated. In a word, it indicates the exact point to which the church has come in its effort to understand Christ.¹ This new insight the definition of Christianity gathers to a head. In such a definition we state with such clearness as we can the conception of Christ to which our experience has led us, and in so doing, not merely serve the practical interests with which we are more immediately concerned, but also contribute our quota to the evidence by which our Master's claim to universal supremacy must finally be tested.

(c.) A word finally as to the bearing of our definition upon the practical work of the church.

From the point of view of the church, the supremacy of Christ is an ideal to be realized by the devotion and loyalty of His followers. The definition of Christianity indicates the church's conception of that ideal, and so of the task to the accomplishment of which its energies must be directed. Such a statement is of the highest practical value.

It is of value for the church, in giving definiteness to its thought and direction to its activity. Without such

¹ This is the truth in Schleiermacher's much criticized saying that Systematic Theology is not a philosophical but a historical discipline. By this he means that it deals not simply with theory, but with facts. It studies things as they are, in order to report what it finds. Its subject-matter is the Christian consciousness, or, to put it more exactly, it is Christian truth, as apprehended by the church under a particular intellectual environment and on the basis of a specific religious experience.

guidance, its energies are in danger of being dissipated in efforts that are useless, if not positively harmful. If preaching is to be effective, Christian nurture intelligent, and missionary enterprise successful, the church must know what is the end which these things are designed to secure. The issues at stake are too important for careless or haphazard methods. The church which expects to win the world to Christ must know what Christ wants of the world, and what He is able to do for it.

It is of value also for the world. It shows those who are not Christians what things the church really regards as important, and so simplifies the issue and hastens decision. It makes it possible to distinguish between the thousand subordinate and unimportant things, and the great essentials in which the Christian life consists, and with which it stands or falls. It helps to discover to those who are following Christ, although unconsciously, what is the real meaning of their life, and so to break down the barriers which separate them from those to whom they are spiritually akin. It transfers the final decision from the sphere of theory to that of practice, and concentrates attention upon the ethical and religious values which alone are of supreme importance.

For these reasons we look for a speedy revival of interest in theology. One of the serious obstacles to Christian progress is the fact that our technical statements of belief so imperfectly represent living issues. Much good work has been done, and many useful contributions made; but they are hidden in monographs,

and scattered in review articles, and their results have not yet been put into form accessible to the general reader. We need statements which shall be at once comprehensive and simple; presenting the essentials of Christianity, freed from the mass of detail with which they have often been encumbered; statements written out of a genuine sympathy with the past, and an intelligent understanding of its contribution to Christian progress, but with a clear understanding of the distinctive needs of our own day, and of the special answer of Christ to those needs. We need some new Schleiermacher, not so much to create, as to interpret the deeper feeling of the age; to vindicate to the earnest men of our day their right to their Christian heritage, even as he vindicated to the men of his the dignity of the religious life of which Christianity is the noblest flower.

What the theology of the future will be like in its details it is too soon to predict. But of one thing we may be sure. It will be a theology for the people. It will have its roots deep in life, and will utter its message in language so simple and direct that the layman as well as the theologian can understand it. It will address itself to permanent human interests, and present Christ as the Lord and the light of all life. Believing in a present God, it will find evidences of His presence in the movements of the time, and will take up into its catalogue of sanctities the familiar experiences and duties now too frequently relegated to a lower sphere. Like its Master, it will seek to hallow all of life by carrying into everything the Christian spirit. Above

all, it will emphasize service as the true bond of union between God and man, — the pathway along which every one must walk who would know the joy which God has reserved for those who love Him.

For such a theology, when it comes, there is a great work in store. To the church it will reinterpret its faith, and give it a fresh consciousness of the Gospel which it is its mission to preach. For the world, it will clear away the misunderstandings and confusion which have often obscured the Christian message, and will concentrate attention upon the simple yet momentous decision upon which all turns at the last.

For the real question between Christianity and its opponents, it cannot be too often insisted, is not primarily theoretical, but practical. It is a question of the power which is supreme in the universe. This is not a matter which is to be settled in the closet of the philosopher, but in the forum and on the market-place. What gives plausibility to the philosophic objection to Christianity is the fact that so many still reject the appeal of Christ and live for ends which He disapproves. To rob these arguments of their force it is only necessary to show that the power of Christ is really strong enough to conquer selfishness, and to establish the kingdom of righteousness, of joy, and of peace among men. This is an issue simple enough for the merest child to understand; lofty and far-reaching enough to call forth the enthusiasm of the strongest and the wisest. It is an issue to the right decision of which every loyal life may contribute, and in which no smallest self-sacrifice is with-

out its value. If we may venture to vary the ancient proverb, we may say that where it is a matter of winning men to Christ *laborare est probare*. Deeds count for more than words. In the world's high debate concerning Christianity, the missionary is the true apologist. 111

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